



2017 Brock International
Prize in Education Nominee

Michele Hilmes

Nominated by Josh Shepperd



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

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To the Brock Prize Board of Jurors:

Please accept the following letter in consideration of Michele Hilmes' contributions to media literacy and media research. Dr. Michele Hilmes retired in 2016 after a long and distinguished career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Between 2011 and 2016 alone she served as a juror for the Peabody Awards, developed a core curriculum for a new graduate program as a Fulbright Scholar in the United Kingdom, and received the prestigious Danielson Award for Distinguished Contributions to Communication for her numerous publications, with dozens of graduate student legacies now working as professors. Perhaps she would even be a viable candidate on behalf of the discipline of "Media Studies" just for her skillful and successful advocacy to add the "M" to SCMS – the Society of Cinema and Media Studies (formerly Society of Cinema Studies) – the largest media studies conference in the world, or her internationally appropriated history of broadcasting textbook, *Only Connect*.

These recent accolades have only served to signify her deep intellectual and methodological influence upon an entire discipline. To encapsulate her three major books – *Hollywood and Broadcasting*, *Radio Voices*, and *Network Nations* – and numerous edited collections and articles: Michele Hilmes has defined the emergence of a new methodological approach to the study of cultural history from an interdisciplinary, mediated, evidentiary perspective. Beginning with film training at NYU, and informed by feminist and cultural studies discourses, in the late 1980s Michele Hilmes set out to account for how gendered and alterity groups have been represented historically, to understand how specific discursive tropes have been formulated and influenced public culture. Along the way she developed a methodology to account for each and every stage of the process creative production - from image, and character, to storyline, beginning with concept and development, through exhibition and reception. Previous to Hilmes' work there were a few precedents in film studies, and to some extent British cultural history work. But no scholarly approaches attempted to qualify an entire historical trajectory of available datum into a holistic assessment of how "representations" have been organized in mass media. Michele Hilmes innovated a historicist view of media literacy, in service of qualitative analysis of how creative industries have worked on a day-to-day basis.

She has interrogated the sound history of race, gender, and class, and the transnational institutional exchanges between U.S. and British media systems, as a way to engage 20th century cultural history. According to Hilmes, to best understand content decisions, one must consult with

extant primary sources, which reveal “intention” and negotiation among creative agents among various stages. For example, she has famously written about how daytime and nighttime radio became “gendered”. As she observed in *Radio Voices*, the industrial framework for radio was far from complete in the 1930s, and programming decisions were made almost solely upon social expectations for gendered performance. Daytime radio became “female” in the 1930s, and commercials and content were developed along the lines of those assumptions. Evening was consequently produced for male demographic, due to the dominance of males in the workplace, and radio followed from these assumptions and honed topics for this assumed audience such as theatrical drama.

Through her historical research, Hilmes has conceived of an approach to media literacy that looks at how the identity of discursive groups, producers, and even nations are constructed to frame the specificity of their perspectives for public circulation. At every point in the process of development, a decision is made by content producers about how to differentiate their text, political belief, or a geographic area from other texts, beliefs, and spaces. As Hilmes has shown, these careful political and aesthetic calculations can be identified, traced, and engaged by scholarly and classroom communities.

According to her work, media texts – radio and television shows, movies, and even news – are composed over a rigorous process of research, development, and testing, followed by aesthetic adjustments to content, which results in the plotlines and characters we see on the screen. To understand how and why an aesthetic decision has been made, according to Hilmes, requires empirical analysis of why content was organized as it was, even for media content that degraded long ago, or was lost from the archives. To understand media, Hilmes has argued that we must look at primary sources such as correspondence and memos, the limits and pressures set by policies upon production values, or the trade journals and ledgers that indicate how a radio or television show is framed for a general audience. Analysis additionally requires literacy of the conventions of voice, production sets, genres, recurring character types, and show formats. When development materials aren’t available, Hilmes has addressed informational content by focusing on aesthetic evidence – timbre of voice, the way that characters address each other, and the way that audiences responded to these texts with reader notes.

The result has been that when media researchers are lucky and they’re able to triangulate a multitude of sources from concept to reception, researchers in the discipline of Media Studies have long followed her lead. And in cases when many historical materials have been lost, she’s provided direction for how to put the puzzle pieces together into a coherent analysis.

It’s for these reasons that I have nominated Michele Hilmes for the 2017 Brock Prize. She has innovated an approach to the study of mass media representations through the triangulation of primary sources, aesthetics, and institutional analysis, informed by debates in cultural studies, feminism, and film. A Hilmesian approach asks critical questions about “why” we’re seeing or hearing what we’re seeing or hearing, and then asks scholars to prove why they’ve come to an interpretative conclusion. According to a Hilmesian model, media texts provide a historical snapshot not only into broadcasting history, but the emergence and negotiation of specific beliefs, media industry framing of information, and audience reception to information. In this way media serves as a major pedagogical tool of public thought deserving of rigorous interrogation, for which she has provided the strongest and most sustainable interdisciplinary model.

Thank you for considering her candidacy,

Josh Shepperd, Ph.D.

MICHELE HILMES

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Professor Emerita, Media and Cultural Studies, Department of Communication Arts,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Department Chair, 2011-2013

Director of Graduate Studies, 2009-2011

Associate Chair, Communication Arts, 2004-2006

Summer Chair, Communication Arts, 2005, 2006

Director of Undergraduate Studies, 1996-2003

Associate Professor, 1995-1998

Assistant Professor, 1993-1995

Fulbright Research Scholar, University of Nottingham, 2013-14

Director, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Department of
Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003 – 2010

**Honorary Associate, Centre for Media History, Macquarie University, Sydney,
Australia**

Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Arts, Spring Hill College, Mobile
1987-1992

Chair, Communication Arts Department, Spring Hill College, August 1989 - August 1990

Lecturer, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama, January 1983-March 1983

Education

Ph.D. Cinema Studies, New York University, 1986

MA, Cinema Studies, New York University, 1981

BA with Honors in Comparative Literature, Indiana University-Bloomington, 1975

Honors and Awards

Visiting Lecturer, University of Liverpool, May 2016

Wayne Danielson Award for distinguished contributions to communications scholarship,
Moody College of Communications at the University of Texas-Austin, 2015.

Fulbright Research Fellowship, University of Nottingham, UK 2013-14

Resident Fellowship, Institute for Research in the Humanities, UW-Madison Fall 2010

Helm Fellowship, Indiana University, Summer 2010

Rockefeller Archive Center Grant-in-Aid, Summer 2009

Faculty Development Seminar, participant in "The Digital Humanities" Fall 2009

Mellon Humanities Workshop, "Audio Culture in the Visual Era," 2007-08

Center for European Studies Travel Grant, December 2003

Vilas Fellowship, University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School, 1999-2001
Sabbatical leave, Communication Arts Department, 1999-2000, 2006-2007, 2013-2014
Steenbock Fellowship, University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School, Summer 1997
WARF Grant, Summer Salary Support, University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School
Research Committee
Duke University. Travel-to-Collections Grant, June 1993
Spring Hill College Faculty Lecture Series, April 1992
Spring Hill College Dawson Research and Service Professor Award, 1991
Ford Foundation Multicultural Studies Grant, 1991

Books

Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States. Fourth edition.
Cengage, 2013
Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era. Co-edited with Jason Loviglio. Routledge,
2013
Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting.
Routledge, 2011
NBC: America's Network. Editor. University of California Press, 2007
The Television History Book. Editor, with Jason Jacobs. British Film Institute, 2003
Connections: A Broadcasting History Reader. Editor. Wadsworth Press, 2002
Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio. Co-edited with Jason Loviglio.
Routledge, 2001
Radio Voices: American Broadcasting 1922 - 1952. University of Minnesota Press, 1997
Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable. University of Illinois Press, 1990

Work in Progress

Contemporary Transatlantic Television Drama. Co-edited with Roberta Pearson and Matt
Hills. Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2017
Photography in Sound: The Radio Feature from Sieveking to Serial - in research stage

Editorial and Evaluative Work

Co-Editor, *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Radio and Audio Media*. Intellect
Press, 2015-
Standing Editorial Board, *Oxford Bibliographies Online: Cinema and Media Studies*, 2011-
Peabody Award Screening Committee, 2015, 2016
Editor, Special Issue: "Women and Soundwork," *Feminist Media Histories*, Fall 2014.
Editor, "In Focus: Sound Studies," *Cinema Journal*, Winter 2008
Editor, Special Issue: "North American Radio," *Radio Journal*, Summer 2008

Editorial Boards

Editorial Board, *Internet Histories*, 2016-
Editorial Board, *Feminist Media Histories*, 2014-
Editorial Board, *Media Industries*, 2013-
Editorial Board, *The Moving Image*, 2008-
Editorial Board, *Media History*, 2007-

Editorial Board, *Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture*, 2008-
Editorial Board (founding), *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media*. 2002-
Editorial Board, *Journal of Radio and Audio Media*, 2004-
Editorial Board, *Television and New Media*, 2001-

Articles and Chapters

- "PBS," in *The New Television Industries: A Guide to Changing Channels*, ed. Derek Johnson. Routledge, forthcoming 2017
- "Sound/Soundwork," *Keywords in Media Studies*, ed. Jonathan Gray and Laurie Ouellette, New York University Press, forthcoming.
- "The Lost Critical History of Radio," *Australian Journalism Review* Special Edition "Radio Reinvented: the enduring appeal of audio in the digital age," 36:2, Spring 2015.
- "Transnational TV: What Do We Mean by "Co-Production," Anymore?," *Media Industries Journal*, 1:2, Fall 2014.
- "Never Ending Story: Authorship, Seriality, and the Radio Writers Guild." In *Companion to Media Authorship*, ed. Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson. Wiley Blackwell, 2013.
- "The New Materiality of Radio: Sound on Screens" in *Radio's New Wave*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio. Routledge, 2013.
- "The New Vehicle of Nationalism': Radio Goes To War." *Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Jonathan Auerbach. Oxford University Press, 2013.
- "The Evolution of Saturday Night." In *SNL, Beyond Saturday Night*, ed. Ron Becker, Matt Sienkiewicz, and Nick Marx. Indiana University Press, 2013.
- "The Whole World's Unlikely Heroine: *Ugly Betty* as Transnational Phenomenon" in *Reading Ugly Betty: TV's Betty Goes Global*, Janet McCabe and Kim Akass, eds. London: I.B. Taurus, 2013, 26-44.
- "Sound Representation: Nation, Translation, Memory" in *Media, Sound and Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Alejandra Bronfman and Andrew Grant Wood. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012.
- "Cinema and the Age of Television, 1945 – 1975," *Blackwell's History of American Film*, ed. Cynthia A. Lucia et al., 2010.
- "The Work of the Archive in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Featured Collections at the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research" *Critical Studies in Television* 5:2 (2010)
- "The 'North Atlantic Triangle': Britain, the US, and Canada in 1950s Television," *Media History* 16:1 (2010) 31-52.
- "Whose Text Is It Anyway? Creativity, Authorship, and the Transnational in Television," *Critical Studies in Television* 3:2 (Autumn 2008) 100-102.
- "Television Sound: Why the Silence?" *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 2:2 (2008) 153-162.
- "Nailing Mercury: The Problem of Media Industry Historiography," *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method*, ed. Alisa Perren & Jennifer Holt. London: Blackwell, 2008, 21-33.
- "A Special Relationship: BBC/US Cross-Influences in Television Drama," in Ib Bjondebjerg, Andreas Fickers, and Jonathan Bignell, eds., *European Television History*. London:

- Blackwell, 2008, 161-164.
- "Digital Television: Definitions," in *Digital Cultures: Understanding New Media* ed. Glen Creeber, Open University Press, 2008, 46-58.
- "Front Line Family: Women's Culture Comes to the BBC," *Media, Culture and Society* 29:1, (January 2007) 5-29.
- "NBC and the Network Idea: Defining 'The American System,' 1926 to 1934" in *NBC: America's Network*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2007, 7-24.
- "Network Nation: Writing Broadcasting History as Cultural History," with Shawn VanCour, in *NBC: America's Network*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2007, 308-322.
- "The Bad Object: Television in the American Academy," *Cinema Journal* 45:1, Fall 2005
- "Fanny Brice and the Schnooks Strategy," *Spectator*, June 2005 (19 pp).
- "Transnational Radio in the Global Age," invited foreword, *Journal of Radio Studies*, Summer 2004 (2 pp).
- "Radio," *Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film*. Thomson-Gale, 2006.
- "Femmes Boff Program Toppers: Women Break Into Prime Time, 1943-1948" in Susan Brinson and J. E. Winn, eds., *Transmitting the Past: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Broadcasting*. University of Alabama Press, 2005.
- "The Wisconsin Historical Society's Media Collection," *Encyclopedia of the Midwest*. 2004.
- "Erik Barnouw" in Horace Newcomb, ed., *Encyclopedia of Television*, 2nd edition. NY: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004.
- "Radio Nations: The Importance of Transnational Media Study" in *Atlantic Communications: Political, Social and Cultural Perspectives on Media and Media Technology in American and German History in the 20th Century*. London: Berg Publishers, 2003.
- "Broadcasting, Cable, and Satellites" *Sage Handbook of Media Studies*, ed. John Downing, Denis McQuail, Ellen Wartella. London and New York: Sage, 2004.
- "The Rise of the Commercial Network Broadcasting System in the United States, 1922-1946," *Die Idee des Radios* V. 4, Media und History Annual, Studienkreis Rundfunk und Geschichte, Berlin, Germany, 2004.
- "The Origins of the Commercial Broadcasting System in the US," "Cable, Satellites, and the Challenge of Digital Media," "US Television in the Multichannel Age," in *The Television History Book*. British Film Institute, December 2003.
- "British Quality, American Chaos: Historical Dualisms and What They Leave Out," *The Radio Journal*, Vol. 1 #1, Spring 2003. 2-17.
- "Who We Are, Who We Are Not: Battle of the Global Paradigms," in *Planet Television*. Eds. Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar. New York University Press, 2003.
- "Rethinking Radio," in *Radio Reader*. Edited by Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio. Routledge Press, 2001.
- "Cable, Satellites, and Digital Media" in *The New Media Book*. Edited by Dan Harries. British Film Institute, 2002.
- "Fanny Brice," "Hollywood and Radio," and "Women and Radio," *Encyclopedia of Radio* edited by Christopher Sterling. Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001
- "Radio" and "Soap Operas," *Encyclopedia of Advertising*. Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000.
- "Desired and Feared: Women's Voices in Radio History" in *Television, History and*

- American Culture: Feminist Critical Essays*. Edited by Mary Beth Haralovich and Lauren Rabinowitz, Duke University Press 1999.
- "Locating Culture: Hollywood and 20th Century Media," in *Media in the 20th Century*, ed. Shin Mizukoshi. Tokyo: Justsystem Inc, 1996. (translated into Japanese)
- "The Goldbergs" and "Hollywood and Television," *Encyclopedia of Television* ed. Horace Newcomb. Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997.
- "Cinema in the Age of Television", in *Oxford History of the Cinema, 1895-1995*. General editor: Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. London: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- "Invisible Men: 'Amos 'n' Andy' and the Roots of Broadcast Discourse", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, December 1993, pp. 301-321.
- American Literary History*. Essay/review of new writing on television (*Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, eds. Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann; *Prime-Time Families: Television Culture in Postwar America*, by Ella Taylor; *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years*, by Mary Ann Watson). Winter 1994, pp. 792-802.
- "Breaking the Broadcast Bottleneck: Pay Television and the Film Industry Since 1975", in *Hollywood in the Age of Television*. Edited by Tino Balio. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990, pp. 297-318.
- "Where Everybody Knows Your Name: Cheers and the Mediation of Cultures", *Wide Angle* 12 no. 2, April 1990, pp. 64-73.
- "The Ban That Never Was: Hollywood and the Broadcasting Industry in 1932", *The Velvet Light Trap*, March 1989, pp. 39-48.
- "Alternatives to the Networks: Subscription Television, 1947-1962", *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Summer 1985 (published January 1987), pp. 213-223.
- "The Television Apparatus: Direct Address", *Journal of Film and Video*, Winter 1985, pp. 27-36.

Reprints and Excerptions

- "Invisible Men: *Amos 'n' Andy* and the Roots of Broadcast Discourse," reprinted in *Routledge Reader on Electronic Media History*, ed. Donald G. Godfrey and Susan Brinson. NY: Routledge, 2015.
- "Radio and the Imagined Community," in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne. NY: Routledge, 2012.
- "*Front Line Family: Women's Culture Comes to the BBC*," Reprinted in *Radio: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. Andrew Crisell, London: Sage, 2009.
- "British Quality, American Chaos: Historical Dualisms and What They Leave Out," Reprinted in *Radio: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. Andrew Crisell, London: Sage, 2009.
- "Who We Are, Who We Are Not: Battle of the Global Paradigms," Reprinted in *Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, ed. Michael Ryan. London: Blackwell, 2007
- "Where Everybody Knows Your Name: Cheers and the Mediation of Cultures", Reprinted in *Critiquing the Sitcom: A Reader*, ed. Joanne Morreale. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003.

Keynote Addresses, Invited Talks, and Symposia

Plenary Panel: The Future of Radio Studies, Transnational Radio Encounters conference, Utrecht, Netherlands, July 2016

Keynote address: "Gender and Seriality: A Reconsideration," Doing Women's Film and Television Histories III: Structures of Feeling, DeMontfort University, Leicester, UK, May 2016

Invited Participant, Peabody TV Archives Conference, October 2015

Invited Participant, University of South Carolina Media Studies Symposium, October 2014

Invited Talk, "The Future of Cinema is Television," Vassar College Nov. 2014,

Invited Participant, "Rethinking Television: A Critical Symposium" *Cineaste* V. 39:4, Fall 2014

Invited Talk, "US/UK Television Co-Production: What, Where, How." University of Sussex, UK, March 2014.

Invited Talk, "Cultural Contagion?" University of Helsinki, Finland, February 2015.

Keynote speaker, "Digital Archives, Audiovisual Media, and Culture Memory. University of Copenhagen, Denmark, November 14-15, 2013

Keynote speaker, "Spaces of Television" conference, University of Reading, UK. September 18-20, 2013

Keynote speaker, "What Is Television?" conference, University of Oregon, March 1-3, 2012

Keynote speaker, "Broadcasting in the Long 1950s" University of Aberystwyth, Wales, July 2011

Keynote lecturer, "Globalisation, Empire and Culture" (Andrew W. Mellon Seminar), University of Galway, Ireland, 30 Nov-4 December, 2009

Invited participant, New Agendas in Global Communication and Media Conference, University of Texas at Austin, October 15-16, 2009

Invited participant, "Connections: The State of Media Studies," University of Virginia, April 2009

Keynote speaker, "Television Without Borders: Transfers, Translations, and Transnational Exchange, Reading, UK, 27-29 June 2008

Plenary Address, "Thinking Through the National: A Transnational Approach to the Cultural History of Broadcasting," Rethinking Television Histories: Digitising Europe's Televisual Heritage conference, King's College, University of London, 19-21 April 2007

Keynote Address, "Blame Canada: Soap Opera, National Culture, and Transnational Migrations," Conference on Media History in Canada, Toronto, June 2006

Plenary Address, "Nationality and Television: The Anglo-American Connection and its Global Consequences," Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Vancouver, March 2006

Keynote Address, "Beyond Americansation: The Global Significance of the Anglo-American Relationship in Broadcasting," Media, Communications, and Cultural Studies Association, Leeds, UK, January 2006

Invited Panelist, Duke University Conference on Podcasting, September 2005.

Keynote address, "The Meaning of Live: How New Technologies Are Making Us Rethink Old Definitions, and What's at Stake," The Radio Conference 2005: A Transnational Forum, RMIT/University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia. July 11-13, 2005.

Invited speaker, University of Notre Dame, September 2004.

Keynote speaker and member of International Board of Referees, Radio Summer School,

University of Siena, Italy, July 26-30, 2004.
Keynote address, "Front Line Family: Women's Culture Comes to the BBC", Visions II: BBC History Conference, University of Central Lancashire, UK, July 2004.
"Europe Attacks! The Twisted History of the Reality Show (and what it tells us about our new transnational media culture)", invited lecture, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, September 2003.
"The Rise of the Commercial Network System in the United States," Invited presentation, Research Circle on Broadcasting History, Berlin, Germany, March 28-29, 2003
"Radio Nations: The Importance of Transnational Media Study" invited keynote response for "Atlantic Communications: Political, Social and Cultural Perspectives on Media and Media Technology in American and German History from the 17th to the 20th Century", Krefeld Historical Symposium, Krefeld, Germany, May 2002
"A History of Broadcasting: Daytime Radio" Wisconsin Public Radio, *University of the Air*, September 9, 2001.
Keynote Speaker, "British Quality, American Chaos: Historical Dualisms and What They Leave Out," Radiodyssey Conference, Brighton, England, July 2001.
"Media, Nation, Gender and the Public Sphere." Series of three invited lectures, University of Jyväskylä and University of Helsinki, Finland, April 2000.
Keynote speaker, "The Uses of Americanization", Maple Leaf and Eagle Conference, Helsinki, Finland, May 1998.
"The Gendered Evolution of the Situation Comedy." University of Chicago, invited lecture, November 1998.
"Who We Are, Who We Are Not: Radio and National Identity in the United States and Great Britain." University of North Texas, invited lecture, March 1998
Interview, "Kansakunnan aani. Michele Hilmes ja radion kultuurihistoria," by Tuija Modinos, *Kulttuurintutkimus* (Jyväskylä, Finland), 14(1997): 4, pp. 3-10
Indiana University -Bloomington, featured participant, "Locating Cultural Studies: Aims, Objects, Publics" February 1997

Advisory, Organizational and Conference Boards

Conference Program Director, Radio Preservation Task Force, 2015-
Board of Directors, Society for Cinema and Media Studies, 2007-10.
Palgrave European Film and Media Studies book series, advisory board, 2013-
Editorial Board, *Encyclopedia of Radio*, ed. Christopher Sterling, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers
Conference Planning Committee, Transnational Radio Conference, University of Lincoln, UK, July 2007
Advisory Committee, "She Made It," Museum of Television and Radio, New York. 2004.
Program Committee Chair, International Conference on Television, Audio, Video, New Media and Feminism: Console-ing Passions (New Orleans, LA, May 30-June 2, 2004)
Academic Advisor, National Endowment for the Humanities Evaluation Panel, Washington, DC, January 2004
Founder and Steering Committee Chair, North American Radio Studies Network, 2003-
Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair, The Radio Conference: A Transnational Forum (conference held in Madison, WI, July 28-31, 2003.)

Board Member, Console-ing Passions Conference on Feminism and Video, 1998-
Advisory Board, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History,
Duke University Library

Advisory Board, *Encyclopedia of Advertising*, Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers

Academic Advisory Board, Library of American Broadcasting, College Park, MD

Conference Panels and Presentations

“Intertel: The Lost History of a Critical Moment in Transnational Documentary” American
Historical Association conference, Atlanta, GA, January 2016

“Radio’s Lost Critical History,” Arclight Conference, May 2015.

“Making Masterpiece Matter: The Transnational Cultural Work of America’s Longest-
Running Prime Time Drama Series.” SCMS Conference 2015.

“Black Radio in the Midwest: WSBC-Chicago and the Brokerage System,” World Records
Symposium, University of Wisconsin-Madison, March 2015.

“*The Man Who Went to War: WWII, Race, and Transnational Media History*,” American
Historical Association Conference, January 2015.

Panel Organizer, “Over the Borderline: Transnational Radio Histories” SCMS 2012

Paper presentation, “Building Bridges, Crossing Wires: The BBC’s North American Service,”
SCMS 2012

Workshop Participant, “Sound Thinking: Rick Altman and Sound Studies” SCMS Conference,
March 2012, Boston

“Radio Rockefeller,” SCMS New Orleans, March 2011.

Participant, “The Future of Television” workshop, SCMS Philadelphia, March 2008

Chair, “Radio Historiography: The Lessons of 25 Years of British Radio History,” The Radio
Conference: A Transnational Forum, 16-19 July 2007

“Broadcasting, Nation, and Battling Empires: The Invention of Broadcast News,” IAMHIST
XXII/ Media and Imperialism Conference, Amsterdam, July 18-21, 2007

Respondent, “Media and Public Spheres” panel, Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Conference, Chicago, 8-11 March, 2007

“Television Sound: Why the Silence?” Workshop on The Future of Sound Studies, Society
for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, Chicago, 8-11 March, 2007

Chair, “Keynotes of Sound Studies—Crossing Disciplinary and National Borders,”
roundtable at American Studies Association conference, Oakland, CA, November
2006

Chair, “Location, Location, Location: Radio Spaces and the Problem of the Local,” American
Studies Association conference, Washington, DC, November 2005

“The BBC and the ‘Blue Book’: Trans-Atlantic Currents in Broadcasting Policy and Reform”
paper presented at Crosstown Traffic: Anglo-American Cultural Exchange since
1865, A conference co-sponsored by The British Association for American Studies,
The North American Conference on British Studies And The Royal Historical Society,
July 2004.

“Europe Attacks! The Legitimation of the Reality Show,” International Conference on
Television, Video, Audio and Feminism: Console-ing Passions, New Orleans,
June 2004

“Trans-Atlantic Currents: BBC & US Broadcasting, 1930-1948,” Broadcast Education

Association conference, Las Vegas, April 2004.

Chair, "The National Broadcasting Company," (panel), The Radio Conference: A Transnational Forum, 28-31 July 2003, Madison, WI

Participant, "Whither Radio History?: A Symposium", Chris Sterling, chair, The Radio Conference: A Transnational Forum, 28-31 July 2003, Madison, WI

Chair, "Radio Form and Aesthetics: Performance and the Imagination" (panel), Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, March 6-9 2003, Minneapolis, MN

"Inventing the Radio Public: "Citizens versus Consumers" in the US and Great Britain, 1922 to 1946." Paper presented at American Studies Association Conference, 8 November 2001, Washington, DC

"The Gendered Public: "Citizen" vs. "Consumer" in the US and the UK". Paper presented at Console-ing Passions Conference, Bristol, England July 2001

Chair, "Radio and Narratives of American Democracy: From the New Deal to the Cold War," panel for American Historical Association Conference, Boston January 2001

"Femmes Boff Program Toppers: Women Break Into Prime Time 1943-48." Paper Console-ing Passions Conference on Feminism and Video, South Bend, IN May 2000

Panelist, "The Future of Television Studies" workshop, Society for Cinema Studies Conference, Palm Beach, April 1999

Respondent, "Radio Voices and the Construction of American Identity," panel at the American Studies Association Conference, Seattle, WA, November 1998.

"Broadcasting at the Borders: Marginal Media and Public Culture," panel for American Studies Conference, November 1997. Organizer, Chair and Commentator.

"Hearing Loss: Radio Dialogue and the Construction of American Identity," paper presented at Society for Cinema Studies Conference, Dallas, Texas, March 1996.

Panelist, Workshop on Researching and Writing the Economics of Film and Television," Society for Cinema Studies Conference, Dallas, March 1996.

Chair, "Television in the 1950s". Panel at Society for Cinema Studies Conference, Dallas, March 1996.

Chair and Commentator, "Transmitting Identities: Radio and U.S. Society, 1920-1950," panel presented at American Studies Association Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, November 1995.

"Making Myths, Creating Monsters: Pat Weaver and Mary Margaret McBride," paper presented at Console-ing Passions Conference, Seattle, April 1995.

"Beating the Networks at Their Own Game: The Hollywood/Ad Agency Alliance of the 1930s." Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies conference, NYC 1995

"Glorified, Ghettoized, and Evicted: The Peculiar History of Women in Early Broadcasting", paper presented at the Console-ing Passions Conference, Tucson, April 1994.

"Regional Roots: The South on Radio". Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies Conference, New Orleans, February 1993.

Panel Chair, "Southern Comfort, Network Worry". Society for Cinema Studies conference, New Orleans, February 1993.

"Invisible Men: *Amos 'n' Andy* and the Origins of the Sitcom" Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies conference, University of Pittsburgh, May 1992.

Panel Chair, "The Packaging of Possibility: Genre Development in Broadcasting". SCS May 1992.

"Teaching the College Course in Communications Technology Systems: A Critical/Cultural Approach". Workshop presented at the Speech Communication Association Conference, Atlanta, November 1991.

"To Sell Products or Culture: The BBC versus the American Experience, 1922-1926". Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies conference, Los Angeles, May 1991.

Panel Chair, "Television Texts and Contexts", SCS Los Angeles, May 1991.

"Hollywood in the Mines: *Black Fury* and Warner Brothers, 1932". Paper presented at the Florida State Conference on Film and Literature, Tallahassee, February 1990.

"Where Everybody Knows Your Name: *Cheers* and the Mediation of Cultures". Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies conference, Iowa City, April 1989.

Panel Chair, "The Institution in the Text". SCS Iowa City, April 1989.

"Radio: The Hollywood Version". Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association conference, New Orleans, March 1988.

"Encoding Sites and Structures in the Radio Discourse: The *Lux Radio Theatre*". Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies conference, Bozeman, Montana, June 1987.

Panel Chair, "Radio Days: The Ontology of Broadcast Structures and Programs". SCS, Bozeman, June 1987.

"More Than Just Music...Again: The Status of Radio in 1986". Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association conference, Chicago, November 1986.

"Radio Goes Hollywood: The Influence of the Film Industry on the Forms of Radio Broadcasting, 1936-1945". Paper presented at the University Film and Video Association Conference, Athens, Ohio, August 1986.

"Hollywood and Broadcasting: The Formative Years". Paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies Conference, New York University, June 1985.

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New York University, Department of Cinema Studies, October 2002

Carnegie Mellon University, Department of English, Fall 2001

Indiana University, Department of Communication and Culture, Fall 1999

Nominating Committee Member, Society for Cinema and Media Studies, 2004-5

Evaluator, National Endowment for the Humanities, Documentary Projects – January 2004

Program Chair, International Conference on Television, Video, Audio, New Media and
Feminism: Console-ing Passions, New Orleans, May 30-June 2, 2004
Society for Cinema Studies, Conference Program Committee, 1997-98
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Arts and Humanities Division Executive Committee, elected April 1998, Chair Spring 2001
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Department of Communication Arts

Personnel and Tenure Committee, 2004-2015
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Chair, Tenure Committee (Shanti Kumar), 2005

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The Lost Critical History of Radio¹

"Of all the established arts, radio broadcasting alone has no adequate corps of professional critics." – Robert J. Landry, 1940

"Radio receives little critical attention. Of the various methods for communicating ideas and emotions—books, newspapers, visual art, music, film, television, the Web—radio may be the least discussed, debated, understood." – Bill McKibben, 2010

Radio has been many things across its nearly 100-year history, shifting its structures, functions, uses and forms to suit the complexities of each historical period. As this journal issue testifies, we are currently in a new kind of "golden age" of soundwork, with creative forms proliferating across the airwaves and the internet, received via traditional broadcast radio, satellite, web streaming, digital downloads, and podcasts, on a host of devices both new and traditional.² More creative soundwork than ever before is available; old art forms have been revived, and exciting new voices can be heard. Yet the two quotes above, seventy years apart, testify to a set of troubling continuities that are intrinsically related to each other: radio's missing archive, and its lack of a critical tradition.

For an art form to flourish, a sense of expressive continuity – a knowledge of aesthetic roots and a sense of how the new connects with the old – is vitally necessary, both for creative producers and for audiences. Yet, across the world but in the US in particular, soundwork's critical history remains in a largely neglected state. Imagine the field of literature without access to the vast majority of books; imagine a contemporary cinema that cannot clearly recall what film was like before *Star Wars*, or *Gone With the Wind*. This is more or less the state of soundwork today. In this article I will focus primarily on the United States, but most of what I say applies to other national contexts as well, with a few notable exceptions that I will highlight.

There are two aspects to radio's lost critical history: the problem of the archive and the problem of critical discourse. First, the vast majority of the soundwork archive is in a scattered,

¹ I'd like to thank those who have contributed information for this article, many via the ever-useful Radio Studies Network: James Cridland, John Grierson, Bridget Griffen-Foley, Virginia Madsen, Siobhan McHugh, Eleanor Patterson, Josh Shepperd, Simon Spanswick, and Hans-Ulrich Wagner.

² I use the term "soundwork" to designate creative/constructed aural texts that employ the basic sonic elements of speech, music, and noise. Typically speech is the dominant aspect of soundwork, with music and noise secondary. It encompasses both drama and documentary work, and can be applied to other aural forms as well, such as comedy, variety, news, and discussion, across any available platform, live or recorded. The term "long-form radio" is sometimes used to refer to similar types of soundwork, in order to make a contrast to music-based programming or advertising.

perilous state. Most of the historical evidence of radio's first seven decades of innovation either disappeared into the ether at its moment of broadcast, or remains locked away behind obsolete and decaying technologies, languishing in little-consulted collections in scattered locations, largely isolated and in many cases uncatalogued and inaccessible. Second, soundwork in most places lacks a critical tradition, formed in critical discourse. Bill McKibben continued his 2010 observations on the neglect of radio by pointing out:

We have no equivalent of the late and lamented British magazine *The Listener*, which combined independent commentary with essays and features that had originally been broadcast as radio pieces; even NPR's own (excellent) journalism forum, *On the Media*, usually concentrates on television or print. There's no well-known radio equivalent of the Emmys or the Grammys or the Oscars (or even the Tonys). (McKibben, 2010, p. 5)

Without such attention, soundwork remains a form cut off from its roots, with even its most talented contemporary practitioners innovating in a vacuum, giving audiences little purchase on how they might understand and appreciate the complexities of the best new work. For a long time, and for many of the same reasons, scholarship neglected the field of sound as well. Recently this has begun to change, as more critical studies of soundwork, histories of radio, and explorations of sound's many cultural manifestations have begun to appear. But so far, this increased critical activity has remained confined to academic circuits with little carryover into more popularly accessible venues and vocabularies. Soundwork criticism is a niche art, not least on radio itself, where it is rarely heard.

Fortunately, the same digital technologies that have sparked the current soundwork revival also point towards solutions to neglect of its history and critical tradition. In this article I examine the dilemma of radio's missing critical history in more depth, focusing primarily on the US but making comparisons to other countries. I also point to new initiatives, some of them well-developed but others in very formative stages, that are working to grant better exposure to radio past and to stimulate critical discussion and review.

What Is a Living Art?

"How could movies be taken seriously if they were to remain so ephemeral, so lacking in pride of ancestry or of tradition?" – Iris Barry, 1969

It may reassure radio scholars to realize that cinema once occupied the same fragile historical/epistemological position that soundwork does today. In her recent book *Saving Cinema*, Caroline Frick traces the conflicted process by which film evolved from its early status as an ephemeral medium of popular entertainment, valued by its owners for its commercial uses but little regarded by the larger cultural establishment, into a recognized global art form to be preserved, archived, circulated, and studied. Through the activities of national film societies, libraries, museums, funding organizations, and dedicated individuals like Iris Barry, a film critic who became the founder of MoMA's film department, cinema eventually became defined as an important aspect of national cultural heritage. Archives collected films and presented them to audiences interested in education, film criticism evolved from entertainment reportage to serious review and evaluation, and a body of scholarship emerged predicated on access to the whole sweep of film heritage and the establishment of a constantly evolving critical language.³

³ As Frick explains, in the US this involved the joint efforts of important organizations like the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which created the American Film Institute, a joint venture with the commercial film industry. American efforts built on the precedent set by other forward-thinking

Cinema's critical history has established itself firmly in the minds of creative artists, audiences, and scholars worldwide.

Soundwork has a ways to go before reaching this level of recognition and institutionalization, especially in the US, where its continuity has been broken. In Britain and in Germany, two places where audio forms have received more public funding and attention than most others, a sustained tradition of soundwork has been maintained, despite a certain amount of marginalization. On BBC Radio in Britain (particularly Radio Four and its online counterpart Radio Four Extra), radio drama, comedy, documentary, and performance are featured daily, with major national daily newspapers providing previews of upcoming broadcasts for the week, reviews of shows after they've aired, and comprehensive listings that can be found in print and online. Drama production is particularly strong, compared to the United States. The BBC maintains a standing Radio Drama Company, and airs more than 600 hours of drama per year, much of it original, with audience numbers that often exceed those for well-regarded television programs. This includes *The Archers*, a radio serial that has been on the air since 1950 and shows no signs of slowing down. Important historical radio dramas are rebroadcast or recreated, including a number from the American radio archive – as for instance a recent BBC/Cymru Wales production, James M. Cain's *Double Indemnity*, first adapted in 1945 by *The Screen Guild Theater* on CBS. Though audiences may not be huge, a recognized and respected space for audio work is preserved and sustained thanks to the BBC's continuity of tradition, public funding, and established national status.

Things are more fragmented in the US. The commercial radio industry turned to music-based radio formats in the 1960s to the exclusion of almost all else besides news and, more recently, political talk (Fornatale and Mills; Barnard). Most of the innovative soundwork heard since the 1960s comes from the non-profit sector – public, community and college radio – and a handful of satellite channels that recirculate this and provide some original programming to the small percentage of US audiences who subscribe. Online audio, including podcasting, emerged as an enormous and lively sphere of creativity in the early 2000s. Public broadcasters, being the best-funded group, have led the way in program innovation and in the revolution in enhanced online services – including significant program archives – that are driving the soundwork revival.⁴ Recent innovations in the nonprofit sector like the Public Radio Exchange (PRX) and the Third Coast International Audio Festival not only encourage new talent but provide a place where listeners can sample a wide range of new work and where independent producers can market their work to stations and distributors. Taken together, these digitally-enhanced venues have sparked a wave of sound innovation and creativity that continues to unfold and expand, scattered across a multiplicity of sites on a financial scaffolding that has always been shaky at best.

Such American-style fragmentation produces innovation, but it also leads to significant gaps and discontinuities. There are no radio shows in Britain quite like *This American Life*, or *Prairie Home Companion*, or *RadioLab*, but more traditional forms of soundwork – drama,

national groups, including most prominently the Cinematheque Francais, the Berlin Reichsfilmarchiv and the British Film Institute, with whom MoMA allied to form The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), dedicated to setting global standards for preserving and archiving the world's film heritage. (Frick, 2011)

⁴ See Hilmes (2013) for a more extensive discussion of US non-profit industry structures and the development of online audio.

comedy, and documentary – thrive and flourish, attract large audiences, receive critical attention, and continue to support new artists and cultivate existing ones. British radio exhibits an ongoing sense of itself and its history; American radio does not. Radio remains a living art in Britain (and in other countries with a similarly-functioning national broadcaster); in the US radio thrives but is not considered art. The reasons for this disjuncture, and some ideas for remedying it, follow in the next two sections.

The Problem of the Archive

While our still-emergent era of “sound on screens” has given American soundwork a newly materialized presence, making creative programs literally and figuratively more visible and preserving the contemporary archive for sustained access, there is still an enormous disconnect between present-day soundwork and its nearly 100 years of creative history. Historical radio programs exist in a kind of archival limbo, partially accessible but not entirely legal, neglected by official archival institutions but enthusiastically preserved and curated by amateurs, rarely cited or consulted by contemporary practitioners or discussed attentively by academic writers, generally ignored by historians. There is little “pride of ancestry” evident for American radio, in a country whose radio industry led the world in size, program output, and global influence, much the way that its film does, and along with television continues to do.

There are some advantages to the “wild west” state of the American radio archive. The BBC holds archival radio programs in a tight grasp. Its websites carefully curate digitally available programs, making access to listening easy for a set window post-broadcast, but once they are pulled from the website they remain locked away behind powerful intellectual property restrictions. Far fewer older programs are available to the general public, since the BBC’s dominating presence means that some of its former policies – such as “wiping” and reusing transcription discs from the 30s and 40s, and having not yet digitized or made available its archive of taped programs – have single-handedly rendered inaccessible a large part of the historical archive and have kept amateur recording and collecting to a relative minimum. However, plans have been underway for some time to open the entire radio and television archive to the public, assuming some arrangement can be made as to rights and royalties.⁵

Compare this to the simple abandonment of most radio recording rights by US commercial broadcasters and producers once television arrived, and “old-time” radio’s subsequent circulation for decades in the “grey market” of amateur trading and collecting. Treated as “orphan” works, collectors began making taped copies from transcription discs in the 1950s, and by the 1970s a sizeable constellation of amateur “archives” and collecting societies had emerged, focusing primarily on popular commercial radio programs of the 1930s through the 60s. Among the largest were (and still are) the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy (SPERDVAC) and the North American Radio Archives (NARA). These are operated as nonprofit “clubs” which permit their members to circulate tens of thousands of recordings of old-time radio programs amongst themselves. Though online catalogues are available with a few digital sample clips, such organizations do not digitize and share programs online (though their members may).

⁵ While earlier schemes have come to naught, see the recent publication *Digital Public Spaces* for a glimpse of future possibilities. (Hemment, D. et al., 2013) And despite the BBC’s best efforts, a body of old-time radio programming has slipped into the public sphere; at the moment of this writing it can be found on RokRadio, an app-based streaming service.

Digital distribution and sale of historical commercial radio recordings has largely been the domain of a few particularly entrepreneurial collectors who offer recordings for purchase and download online without worrying too much about rights issues, such as David Goldin of Radio Yesteryear/Radiola and Jerry Haendiges of Vintage Radio, one of the founders of SPERDVAC.⁶ Some enthusiasts branched out to create over-the-air radio shows, mostly on public and community stations, that rebroadcast old-time radio classics; this remains a popular type of radio program across the country.⁷ With the internet came a logical migration, for both commercial and free sharing purposes. The Internet Archive now hosts thousands of radio programs of all types, and there is a lively universe of old-time radio podcasts featuring mostly the same familiar titles and programs, all (arguably) in the public domain and widely circulated online and off. Given widespread dispersion and the murky rights situation, it would be very hard to get the old-time radio archive back into the rights-controlled bag, though the BBC apparently makes some attempt, since relatively few of its older programs appear on the Internet Archive radio pages.

Serious efforts have been made by amateur collector/curators and radio collector associations to assemble reliable information about their holdings and to document shows' entire run of episodes, air dates, cast information, etc. Many scholars have employed such amateur-sourced reference works as John Dunning's *On the Air*, Frank Buxton and Bill Owen's *The Big Broadcast*, and guides published by Jay Hickerson, long-time organizer of the now-defunct Friends of Old Time Radio convention. David Goldin has placed his RadioGoldIndex online, and gives an entertaining account of how he acquired his collection. (Goldin, 2014) Another cataloguing project is run by the Old Time Radio Researchers Group, which provides information on more than 200,000 programs. Annual conventions and conferences have gone a long way towards providing the kind of contextualizing activities so important to cultivating an art form, from re-enactments of old radio shows, to recorded interview with practitioners, to publicity for published work and archival discoveries. Obviously, amateur collecting and curating has played an absolutely vital role in keeping at least a part of the US radio heritage alive, at a time when established archives were not interested in taking on the task.

Yet these widely circulated programs represent just the tip of the iceberg of the totality of soundwork produced since the 1930s (when recording became a more regular feature of radio operations). Many official audio archives and sound-related collections exist, but it has been well documented that, as media curation and preservation came to focus more heavily on film and visual media than on sound, audio materials languished. (Paton, 1990) The Library of Congress, the Museum of Broadcasting, the Paley Center (formerly the Museum of Television and Radio), the Library of American Broadcasting, and a few other sites thankfully preserve hundreds of thousands of recordings, but locating individual recordings and accessing them remains a difficult task. Furthermore, the history of non-commercial and local broadcasting has been almost completely neglected, and along with these sectors documentary, feature, and non-fiction programming generally gets left out. Though archival holdings exist, particularly for programs produced by the educational/public radio sector since the 1940s, they are scattered, not

⁶ Another company, Radio Spirits, claims to own the rights to a number of series formerly distributed by Charles Michelson in the 30s and 40s, but the situation is unclear.

⁷ One of the most respected "DJ/curators" in this genre is Chuck Schaden, whose programs *Those Were the Days* and *Old-Time Radio Classics* aired in Chicago since the 1970s. Schaden supplemented rebroadcasts of radio programs with interviews with radio stars and producers, and published several popular historical books.

well documented, and have never been brought together in a common reference source. It is no wonder that when today's radio artists cite their major influences, rarely do they mention radio's historical legacy, especially in the field of documentary and feature programming.

Thus, the problems of the soundwork archive are threefold. First of all, sound has been given low priority by the archival establishment; as Christopher Ann Paton writes in one of the few articles to address the subject, "Over time, photographs and film have earned a respected niche in the world of archival documentation... Similar interest is not evident in the archival literature regarding sound recordings and magnetic tape." (Paton, 1990, p. 275) Cinema's success at establishing itself as a national treasure has come at sound's expense (at least until recently; see below). This has been exacerbated by the fact that the materials on which sound has been recorded are less stable than film, evolving from acetate or glass transcription discs, to vinyl recordings and magnetic tape, to audio cassette and on to CD and Mp3 files, posing a considerable challenge to chronically under-funded media depositories which have struggled to keep up. Thus, decisions made by amateur collectors have driven our knowledge of soundwork's history, and while their work has been extremely valuable, they tend to focus on a limited range of entertainment programming, and remain shut out of the official archival sphere.

Secondly, the division between paper collections and other "eye-readable materials" (Paton, 1990, p. 78) and recorded sound persists in the archival world even today; the vast majority of collections specialize in the former, as do the archivists who make decisions on processing and cataloguing. As Paton argues, paper-oriented archivists understand their job as the preservation of the information contained on any given document or record, and not the original text itself:

Consequently, the paper archivist is likely to be concerned first and foremost with the informational content of recordings. The actual sounds captured by many of the recordings that come to paper-oriented repositories may be considered less important than the information they convey, and the recordings themselves may be viewed as dispensable once this information has been transcribed. (Paton, 1990, pp. 275-6)

This issue is exacerbated by the fact that recorded soundwork requires an expanding array of different devices to "unlock" its information, while fragile and disintegrating recording media may actually be harmed in the process of migrating and preserving it. Additionally, listening to sound recordings must take place in real time; they cannot be "skimmed" or taken in at a glance. Given all this, one of the questions Paton suggests that archivists might ask themselves when assessing audio preservation - "Is it important that the *sound* on this recording be preserved?" - is well justified but sets off serious alarm bells for soundwork scholars. At least amateurs/collectors are interested in the sound. For radio scholars, actually listening to the programs they study has long posed a challenge that digital distribution has only begun to ameliorate. Yet those works that consider the *sound* of radio have produced unique insights into its role as a social institution and as an important influence on other art forms.⁸

Finally, a distinction must be made between the area of audio archiving most closely associated with *music and performance*, and that primarily associated with *radio*, or speech-based forms. Music preservation has long enjoyed a higher priority than radio preservation. This

⁸ See, for example, Shawn VanCour's study of the evolution of sound techniques and their impact on film and television; Neil Verma's detailed analysis of studio production in the 1930s and 40s; and Virginia Madsen's history of the creative radio feature as an international form.

has to do both with the higher cultural status accorded music performance as an art form, and the fact that, unlike radio recordings, most musical recordings were made specifically to be fixed, marketable, easily accessible commercial products. They are more likely to be collected in libraries and by the general public, and can be more easily classified by the way they are labeled and understood as unique works: performer, title, publisher. Thus a lively field of recording preservation primarily directed at music does exist – for instance, the National Recording Preservation Board (NRPB), enacted by Congress in 2000 under the aegis of the Library of Congress (LOC) as the audio equivalent of the National Film Preservation Board (I will say more about its radio efforts shortly), the LOC’s National Jukebox Project, the Association for Recorded Sound Collections – but radio/soundwork preservation represents only a small ancillary concern in the sound preservation arena, pushed aside by the dominance of music.

The Problem of Critical Discourse

Why does the archive matter? Without a grasp of soundwork’s past, it is hard to imagine its future or to evaluate its success. It is telling that in a (wonderful) recent compilation of essays by some of today’s most celebrated radio auteurs, scarcely any mention is made of historical precedents for their work beyond the early days of NPR (Biewen, 2010). While creativity will find a way, and it would be hard to argue that the likes of Jay Allison, Ira Glass, Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva (the Kitchen Sisters), Alan Hall, and Dmae Roberts need much help from history to shape their expressive soundwork, it is interesting that only Hall – the sole British radio producer in the compilation – mentions a continuity with the soundwork past (though even he claims a more direct influence from film and music) (Hall, 2010, p. 101). America’s documentary heritage, in particular, is closed off from its current practitioners. How many have heard, or even heard of, documentary filmmaker Pare Lorentz’s venture into soundwork with the experimental radio feature *Ecce Homo* in 1938, on CBS’s storied *Columbia Workshop*? How many have actually listened to the prodigious output of “radio’s poet laureate” Norman Corwin, or thought about his groundbreaking work in relation to theirs? Is it possible that consideration of the long-running grandmother of radio news programs, *The March of Time*, might illuminate some of documentary radio’s current fiction/factual border-crossing practices? Good luck, because those recordings remain largely locked behind archival doors in Lincoln Center.

Knowledge of soundwork’s heritage is also closed off from listeners, and here is where lack of a critical tradition enters the scene. This article began with two quotes bracketing sixty years of an absence: that of an established critical sector for sound. As Robert Landry’s 1940 essay shows, paucity of serious criticism and review was perceived as a problem throughout radio’s history, and in fact, in the wake of his call and its endorsement by other influential radio writers of the time (Siepmann, 1941; Wylie, 1940; Lazarsfeld, 1948), radio criticism in major news outlets increased. As Ralph Lewis Smith writes, “by the end of the forties the press was paying more attention to the criticism of broadcasting than ever before” (Smith, 1959, p. 42). John Hutchins and later Jack Gould provided thoughtful commentary in the *New York Times*; John Crosby held forth in the *New York Herald Tribune*; Saul Carson contributed lengthier essays in *The New Republic*; and Robert Louis Shayon began his association with the *Christian Science Monitor*. However, by now television had entered the scene, and as a later study showed, “The abandonment of radio criticism in favor of television criticism was indeed abrupt. By 1950 – just a few years after the ‘birth’ of television – critics were already devoting 76% of their space to TV.” By 1960, that number was 98% (Shelby, 1966-67, p. 30).

As Shelby points out, this cannot be entirely attributed to the decline of network radio, since in 1950 network radio “was still very much alive.” Even in the UK, where radio had not declined and in fact where the advent of the Third Programme in 1946 had given a new prominence to long-form soundwork, the same complaint could be heard, especially about radio drama: “Frankly I am at a loss to know why national newspapers particularly don’t devote more space to radio criticism. Radio may be a transitory medium but despite this it’s an increasingly influential one in the world of drama as a whole.” (Imison, 1965, p. 9, quoted in Preissnitz, p. 28) This references the fact that the audience for an average radio play “would fill a West End theater for ten years,” but theatrical dramatic criticism far outweighed that of its sonic counterpart. And as Horst Preissnitz wrote more than 15 years later, in 1981: “The attitude of professional literary criticism is no less puzzling. Here, the television play seems to have exercised an extraordinary fascination, while the far older radio play has been left as the Cinderella of literary history” (Preissnitz, 1981, p. 29). Thus, availability of programs was not the problem, audience numbers were not an issue, nor could the ephemerality of the broadcast medium be blamed, since live television received adequate critical coverage. Radio was simply overlooked.

Today, with ample “materialized” information and programs available across multiple devices and platforms, and with listening audiences growing both for broadcast and for online audio, there would seem to be even less reason that soundwork should not be reviewed, previewed, criticized and discussed as much as its visual and literary counterparts. Yet this does not occur. Even in British and German newspapers and magazines, discussion of soundwork is minimal, and in the US virtually nonexistent. The *New York Times* typically reviews upwards of 50 movies per week, and at least as many theatrical and musical performances. Yet rarely will mention of a sound-based program enter its pages, and when it does it’s usually Ira Glass. Influential journals like *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and the online *Slate* regularly review movies, television, music, and the other arts, but rarely radio – unless it concerns Ira Glass. Yes, there are some online sites dedicated to radio and soundwork criticism, but they are obscure and hard to find, and seem to belong to the amateur cohort so prominent in other aspects of radio studies.

In other arts, venues of daily/weekly criticism and review rest like the tip of an iceberg on a more substantial body of critical analysis and theory, one that is actualized not only in academic publications and venues (though these are important and perhaps fundamental) but in an institutional scaffolding that similarly supports identification of artistic merit, meaningful expression, and formal innovation. Without some agreement on what constitutes that which is interesting and deserving of attention in the vast bulk of soundwork available today, where can regular review and criticism start? The emergence of academic work that focuses on those mainstays of criticism and review – the text and the artist – is an encouraging sign (see, for example, Verma, 2012; Madsen, 2013; Gilfillan, 2009; Heuser, 2013), as are some emergent online sites for deeper critique, such as the RadioDoc Review and Sounding Out!.

And there are some organizations that have been regularly recognizing and rewarding outstanding work in the field for decades. The oldest and best-respected is the Prix Italia, which gives an annual prize for outstanding works in radio music, drama and documentary, with an international cast of entrants. The annual Peabody awards, based in the US, give prizes for the best media work in radio, television, and online media from around the world, with criteria that include not only artistic excellence but socially meaningful content. Moreover, the Peabody Archive, based at the University of Georgia, retains all entries since the prize began in 1946 – a

truly unparalleled archive of excellence in broadcasting with a strong emphasis on public and educational media. Another international festival, the New York Festivals Worlds Best Radio Programs, has a broad scope that includes advertising and commercial news programs as well as long form drama, documentary, children's programs, and more. Some awards are more nationally based, like the British Radio Academy Awards, the Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden in Germany, the Walkley Awards in Australia, and Les Lauriers de la Radio et de la Television in France, to name just a few.

Awards and prizes such as these, carefully juried and publically promoted, point to a field of agreed excellence within the world of soundwork, but tend to have resonance almost solely within the world of professional media production. Though the awards ceremonies may be televised or otherwise made available for viewing, the winning productions are rarely reviewed or circulated (though they can usually be found online for a limited period) or discussed in the press. This is true even for those organizations that enthusiastically seek a wider audience, such as the Third Coast International Audio Festival held in Chicago, which rarely receive much media publicity – not even on the radio. There is still a lack of crossover with the educational sector that would work to bring soundwork into the classroom and into the academic sphere of recognition. This means that conditions that might support a broader dialogue about quality, history, tradition, form and all the other things that go into constructing a living art do not happen outside of relatively limited confines.⁹ What can be done?

Converging Solutions

If the radio-based soundwork archive is to survive and become part of a living heritage, if soundwork as a sphere of cultural expression is to break free of its niche boundaries and receive the kind of critical reception it deserves, it seems clear that the task will require the participation of scholars, critics, listeners, and the radio industry itself, most notably the nonprofit sector. Over the past ten years, a number of projects have been initiated that are centrally concerned with promoting digital access to historical and contemporary soundwork, and with using digital communication to encourage greater participation and engagement – and more are springing up every day. For instance, many broadcasters and individual production companies are making use of a combination of websites, email newsletters, social media, and podcasts to perform some of the functions that radio schedule listings, program previews, print publicity, and on-air promotion used to do in the past, as well as giving access to a particular program's archives. This works especially well for large national broadcasters – the BBC's web presence had gotten so extensive that the last license renewal actually mandated a cut-back in online operations – but even there it turns soundwork publicity into a sphere of private, on-demand communication, rather than announcements appearing in public space. An already-committed audience is required. In the US, sites like PRX, Third Coast, and Transom not only give access to soundwork contributed by individual producers, both established and just starting out, but provide commentary, helpful advice, and a way to gain wider distribution. Transom.org, which bills itself as “a showcase and workshop for new public radio,” gives production tips, organizes workshops around the country, acts as a form for producers, and features new work. A coming challenge for these organizations may be to recognize and support their archival functions: they

⁹ Again, this situation is somewhat different where there is a national broadcaster that encourages dialogue between educational programs and scholars. The International Features Conference, a joint endeavor since the 1960s between European public broadcasters, is one example.

are in effect building the archive of the future, though this is far from their primary objective at the moment. And again, they only reach those who are already tuned in to the soundwork universe.

Other projects point the way towards unlocking America's sonic past and bringing the current state of soundwork into productive conversation with its cultural inheritance. One lively site is WNYC, New York City's long-standing public radio station. Prompted by a move from its old headquarters on Centre Street to more spacious digs, and with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the WNYC Archive was formally established in 2000. With cooperation from other archives containing WNYC-produced material, the WNYC archive of more than 50,000 recordings and a host of supplementary materials such as photographs, internal records and reports, is being assembled and preserved through digital migration and cataloguing that has begun to open up its holdings to researchers (WNYC, 2014). Along the way, a digital platform is being constructed that provides information about and allows general public access to a sampling of WNYC's historical audio, contextualized and curated. Similar projects are underway at many of the major US public radio stations. Pacifica Radio has long had a sense of the importance of its audio archive in American cultural and political history, and has made those archives available to researchers for a number of years. Recently, they have reached out to the public with several digitization projects, including open digital access to two significant programs aired on Pacifica affiliate WBAI-New York: *The Free Music Store* and *The Mind's Eye Theater* as well as the ongoing "American Women Making History and Culture 1963-1982" project. In such initiatives, media outlets working in the tradition of public outreach attempt to create a broader awareness of radio's history and past accomplishments.

Some of the best-organized and -funded digital archival projects have come from countries with strong central national broadcasters. For example, the LARM (Audio Research Archive) project in Denmark brings together the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and a number of partners, including several universities and the national library and museum, in a joint interdisciplinary project.

The main purpose of LARM is to establish a digital archive with the appropriate tools and a bibliography to enable researchers to search and describe the many recordings of the radiophonic cultural heritage. Radio has played an important role in Danish lives and, today, radio broadcasts form an invaluable, yet untapped, source to Danish culture and history. LARM Audio Research Archive will allow access to thousands of hours of national and local radio broadcasts from 1925 and onwards and thus prepare them for future research. (LARM, 2014)

Here, scholars and researchers will be the first "audience" for the digital archive; the information that they both bring to and derive from their access to these recordings will provide the contextualization necessary for future conservation and preservation efforts, and to make the collection more accessible to the general public.

A project still in its early stages in the US has the advantage of powerful institutional parents. Like its cinema counterpart, the National Film Preservation Board (founded in 1988), the National Recording Preservation Board of the Library of Congress was created in 2000 by the US Congress to nominate each year a select number of recordings to be inducted into the National Registry and deposited in the Library of Congress, based on cultural, historical and artistic significance. The intention is not only to highlight these few recordings, but to stimulate the preservation of America's sonic heritage. Though any kind of sound recording can be nominated, in practice it is musical recordings that have dominated, with the few radio programs

on the list mainly consisting of news and commercial entertainment. In 2013, the NPRPB recognized the importance of including more radio-based work, particularly public, community, and local radio, and appointed a Radio Preservation Task Force under the direction of eminent radio scholar Christopher H. Sterling of George Washington University. Over the next several years, a coalition of broadcast historians and sound archivists will collaborate to assess the soundwork holdings of archives scattered across the US and pull them together in a usable database. A conference planned for spring 2015 will begin discussion of how to prioritize the preservation of significant works for the NPRPB, but an even more valuable outcome may be to create a venue in which scholars, archivists, and media professionals can gather to discuss the newly discovered state of American soundwork history and to integrate these materials into the broader historical narrative. At least, they will give us a place to start, backed by a powerful central cultural institution in the Library of Congress.

Radio can become a living art only through the critical embrace of its past. Such projects as the WNYC website, the LARM initiative, and the Radio Preservation Task Force begin with an archive but reach out from there, most directly to scholars and researchers. But they must make links to the general public and to the world of soundwork production if they are to spark a critical revival. It was when cinema became not only an art but a field of public commentary, generating specialized publications that combined criticism, review and industry discussion, that film became part of the general cultural conversation. Many were sponsored by publicly-funded organizations: *Sight and Sound* by the British Film Institute in Britain, *Film Comment* by Lincoln Center, *American Film* by the American Film Institute), others operated commercially or through amateur funding. Today online publication can more easily be initiated and sustained. One example mentioned earlier, the RadioDoc Review, founded in 2014 by an international group of scholars and practitioners and based at the University of Wollongong in Australia, asks the vital question: “What, in fact, are the unique strengths and characteristics of our particular medium and form?” (McHugh, 2014, p. 3) If we can sustain a discussion along these lines, applied across the many forms and venues of soundwork, then radio will live as an art the way it always has in our daily lives.

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3

THE NEW MATERIALITY OF RADIO

Sound on Screens¹

Michele Hilmes

A decade ago, at a radio conference held in Madison, Wisconsin, the question on everyone's lips was "what is the future of radio?" Clearly some kind of transition was in progress, but it was hard to see the way forward in the face of the enormous consolidation and conglomeration occurring in the radio business, the continued dominance of satellite-delivered music formats, and the decline of that traditional backbone of US radio broadcasting, the local station.² In 2003, online streaming had become widespread, peer-to-peer file sharing was rocking the music business, and low-cost digital tools for audio production were in the hands of a growing segment of the tech-savvy, but the outlook for radio as we knew it remained unclear. Radio's death was predicted as often as its survival, as the individualized listening experience of iPods, earphones, and playlists seemed poised to replace everything that had most endeared radio to its public as a live, shared medium over the previous eighty years.

Many uncertainties remain, but clearly the tide has shifted. "What isn't radio today?" more accurately sums up the current situation, pointing to the sense of exploding categories and expanding possibilities that the new digital sound environment has loosed upon us. Radio's present era is marked by a transformative new materiality, as digital platforms finally overcome the ephemerality that once made radio so hard to capture and assess as a cultural form; a new mobility, as radio moves across devices and into new spaces; and by a new globalism, as digital accessibility unleashes radio and extends it well beyond its former local and national boundaries. Radio has not only survived but revived, both as a creative medium and as a shared cultural experience.

So, what is radio, as I'll be using the term here? No longer constrained by the technologies, institutions, and practices of the pre-digital era, radio must now be understood as *soundwork*,³ the entire complex of sound-based digital

media that enters our experience through a variety of technologies and forms. Today radio is a screen medium: we access it through screens both mobile and static, using tactile visual and textual interfaces. Through screens we listen to soundwork both streamed and podcast, enjoying its programs live and listening again later, creating our own “radio” through playlists and algorithms. Radio crosses platforms: no longer confined to specialized receivers, it is experienced via headphones and computer speakers, on digital players, television sets, phones, and tablets; in our cars, on the subway, at the gym, walking down the street. Thanks to the variety of digital platforms and practices developed by professionals and amateurs alike, radio’s archive has opened up for enjoyment and analysis as never before, as far back as the first golden age of network broadcasting but also including the previously largely inaccessible soundwork of last week, or last month, or last year.

Radio is still about music, yes, though music no longer confines itself to its former definitions and devices either; it too has become a screen-based medium. But radio is also comprised of comedy podcasts, archived discussion programs, time-shifted voice tracking, public radio newsmagazines, short and long-form audio documentaries, curatorial sites, interactive audio drama, sound installations, audio tours of urban spaces, audiobooks with or without musical soundtracks, historic sound events posted on YouTube, spoken word collections, nostalgic broadcasts of old-time radio, audio collectors’ online offerings, and the hundreds of audio apps available for iPhones and tablets. To claim all these previously unconnected elements of the soundscape as “radio” would in the past have seemed ridiculous overreaching, since they derived from such different sources. Now that they have all come together on digital platforms they clearly emerge as diverse aspects of a sonic cultural landscape whose commonalities we can at last see plainly.

Radio is the art of sound. This is the title Rudolph Arnheim gave his groundbreaking study back in 1936, and his exploration of sound’s protean capacities under the rubric “radio” is what prompts my appropriation of the term to cover contemporary sound’s expanded universe.⁴ This chapter is a preliminary attempt to limn the contours of radio’s new wave, tracing its struggles with ephemerality and negotiations with materiality over time. This leads to a discussion of the implications of thinking about radio as a screen medium as well as an overview of some of the innovative programs and initiatives brought about by radio’s intersection with the digital, particularly in the fields of public radio and independent sound production.

The New Materiality of Radio

One of radio’s earliest creative geniuses, the BBC’s Lance Sieveking, began his 1934 book *The Stuff of Radio* with a section titled “Ghastly Impermanence of the Medium.”⁵ Perhaps no one is more entitled to bemoan early radio’s

ephemerality than Sieveking. Though he produced hundreds of original radio compositions, many of them highly experimental montages of live and recorded sound mixed through a specially designed “dramatic control board” and transmitted live over the BBC network, few were recorded and none survive.⁶ For his twenty years of innovative work, only a few scripts, scrapbooks of sketches and clippings, and his long out-of-print book remain: the rest is silence. This was the fate of the bulk of radio production until the mid-1930s, and it echoes the many aspects of sound’s persistent ephemerality that kept creative soundwork in a secondary cultural position through much of its history. A brief overview of radio’s contested relationship with recording demonstrates how significantly sound’s new digital materiality has revolutionized the ways in which soundwork is produced, distributed, presented, and preserved over space and time, leading the way into a discussion of some of the new practices that digital materiality has enabled over the last decade.

Though the BBC began to make use of recorded programs in its Empire Service in the early 1930s—long before broadcasters in the US, where the use of recordings on the air was strongly discouraged by regulation⁷—the limitations of early recording technologies placed severe restrictions on the production and preservation of broadcast texts. An art of live studio production emerged in radio in the 1920s that, for both technological and regulatory reasons, used recorded sound very sparingly.⁸ The bulkiness and fragility of disc recorders in the 1930s and early 40s, combined with discs’ very short playing time, meant that capturing and preserving actuality sound was well-nigh impossible. Furthermore, such recordings could not be edited. Studio producers of radio’s “golden age” combined live music and performance with sound effects (mostly produced live but sometimes recorded), mixed through a control board much as Sieveking had done, and transmitted live. Shows like *The March of Time*, the closest thing to news coverage during this period, made an art of re-creating world events for the ear, from the speeches of politicians (re-enacted by a stable of impersonating actors) to sports events, to human interest stories, dramatized and performed live in the studio.

Once produced and transmitted, few programs were recorded (more typically, they might be re-performed for subsequent live broadcasts). Only the most historically or economically important broadcasts were preserved on transcription discs by radio networks and producers until the late 1930s, and despite the size of these discs only 15 minutes of programming could be captured per side.⁹ Wire recorders remained bulky and problematic through the early 1940s, though they became increasingly important to BBC World Service output during the war years. A few broadcasters experimented with sound-on-film devices, too, most notably the Phillips-Miller recording system, which used 16mm film coated with gelatin and an opaque layer into which sound waves were etched with a sapphire needle. It could be played back without optical development, and allowed a certain amount of editing to be done before

re-recording on disc. The advantage of this system was that up to an hour of programming could be captured on a single reel of film; it was particularly useful for lengthy speeches, or for classical music programs.¹⁰

Though commercial companies began to syndicate radio programs on transcription disc in the late 1930s, and the practice was developed even further by the Armed Forces Radio Service during World War II, it was not until magnetic tape recording emerged from the spoils of war in the late 1940s¹¹ that sound could be more easily collected and edited, and radio programs could be reliably and relatively cheaply preserved for later reference and use. However, with the debut of television at precisely this time, both audiences and home-based entertainment began a rapid shift over to that new medium (in the US, particularly), which quickly went through its own evolution from live broadcast to filmed commodity form.

In the United States, radio de-nationalized and transformed itself into a local medium for music presentation in the 1950s, drawing on a developing music industry revitalized by new durable and long-playing recording formats (the vinyl LP and 45) and studio recording techniques that allowed multi-track mixing and new creative production practices. The small remainder of radio that was not music—such as DJ patter, news, a few public affairs or educational shows—remained live, with little effort made to archive any of its staggering number of hours of output.¹² Non-music or “spoken word” recording, though it grew through the 1960s and 70s, made up only a tiny fraction of commercial record sales, dominated by comedy, poetry, and religious sermons, marketed in a special section at your neighborhood record store.¹³

Under these circumstances, radio as a creative, vital form in its own right merited Fred Allen's gloomy summary: “Radio is the only medium that died before it was born.” Yet he spoke too soon, at a low point in the production of creative soundwork in the US (though a high point in the emergence of popular music, enabled by radio). The advent of National Public Radio in 1970 began turning the tide of soundwork's cultural invisibility, as its member stations debuted high-profile national newsmagazines and a variety of national and regional programs through the 1970s and 80s. Though the primary emphasis remained on news and public affairs programming, NPR's parent, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, funded several significant experiments in programming.

One of these was Wisconsin Public Radio's nationally distributed *Earplay*, an anthology drama series launched in 1972 focused on original works by famous playwrights such as Edward Albee, Archibald MacLeish, and David Mamet; another was an ambitious adaptation of *Star Wars* for radio in 1981.¹⁴ However, as Jack Mitchell states, “Although critically successful, *Earplay* did not attract audiences and did not revive radio drama,” and as for *Star Wars*, “It probably introduced some new listeners to NPR, but its long-term impact was minimal.”¹⁵ Long-form documentary production lagged behind as well,

in an NPR schedule focused on its national news magazine program. *All Things Considered* above all else. As Mitchell points out, “Public radio, like all radio, builds audience through loyalty, which means giving listeners relatively consistent service 365 days a year, rather than half-hour events heard once a week for thirteen weeks and then disappearing.”¹⁶ Listeners expected continuous flow, not unique events to which, once missed, they could not return.

Through the mid-1990s, radio's problem remained its intractable immateriality: the “ghastly impermanence” no longer of live production, in this era of tape recording, but of what we might call “live listening,” based on the lack of any kind of permanent visible and material record of radio's presence aside from the numbers on the radio dial. Soundwork no longer needed to be produced live, but it was distributed live and received live. Radio had no theater marquee, no headlines on display at the newsstand, no TV Guide; though its invisible signals might saturate the atmosphere all around, they could not be lastingly perceived or returned to. One way that early network radio had coped with this ephemerality was its insistence on seriality: radio programs were produced as long-running series, scheduled at the same day and time each week, substituting predictability for tangibility, repetition for materiality. Music radio formats replaced seriality with the regularity of the musical clock, a cyclical schedule of constantly repeating playlists, leading listeners to the purchase of records as the material commodity of the radio form.

Early public radio, dedicated to long-form programs, struggled with this problem. If you joined your public radio station you might receive a monthly program guide which, if you could find it as you listened in your car or bathroom or office, might allow program recognition to develop. This was about the best that long-form radio could do, and it wasn't enough, non-music radio audiences grew slowly in the 1970s, reaching only about 3% of the listening audience. As radio listening became more mobile, through transistor technology and then the 1980s Sony Walkman, the immateriality problem became even more acute.¹⁷ Radio simply could not be preserved, archived, accessed, and shared in a viable way, despite the culture of old-time radio enthusiasts who developed extensive lending libraries of audiocassette recordings during these decades. Locating and listening to long-form radio was an arduous and arcane proposition through the mid-1990s. Once missed, a program could not be heard again; titles and credits were announced once or twice and then lost to memory; complex and tightly constructed soundworks passed rapidly before the ears and vanished, never to be heard again. Under these conditions, a coherent and sustainable sound culture simply could not develop.¹⁸

When digital platforms emerged in the late 1990s, radio stations of all kinds were quick to see their potential. Finally, radio might acquire a material interface to present to the world, a permanent marker of its presence as well as an alternative delivery system. Internet radio streaming began in 1994, accelerated with the development of audio software in the late 1990s, then exploded in the

early 2000s as broadcasters and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) worked out rights and royalty issues through SoundExchange. Local radio went global. For the first time, radio stations anywhere in the world could find audiences far outside the reach of their broadcast signal; for the first time, too, stations required a web presence through which viewers could activate their stream. Radio became visible. Global listening became possible, beyond the specialized shortwave stations long hosted by governments. This went hand in hand with the increased materiality and visibility that a screen presence allowed. Previously invisible sources of sound, flowing through the ether from thousands of transmitters unknown to anyone outside the local area, now had a tangible presence and a worldwide reach on sites that aggregated them and made them accessible to a broad public.

Internet streaming had the capacity to turn virtually anyone into a virtual radio station; it challenged existing radio stations to think about the visible face they presented to the public. Very little has been written to date about the materialization of sound culture online and the various paths it took, but surely future scholars will recognize this as a turning point and trace the history of this process. Radio quickly responded to new digital possibilities in a variety of ways. Stations reproduced program schedules; described the content of individual shows; published photos of heretofore faceless radio personalities and supplied details of their lives and experience; narrated the history and mission of the station; posted advertising or underwriting announcements; linked to related sites and events; asked listeners to email the station and allowed discussion and exchange to flourish; solicited memberships and affiliations and asked for donations; showed photos of the studios and broadcasting facilities; a whole host of information and activities never before possible so easily and so comprehensively.

Radio's first wave of adaptation to the digital, then, followed the precepts of "re-mediation" as articulated by Bolter and Grusin:¹⁹ digital platforms allowed radio stations and producers to do what they always had done, only in a different format, with more depth and permanence. The long-term consequences, however, were immense. Today, many listeners think of their favorite radio stations as online information providers as much as over-the-air broadcasters; for them, sound is just one aspect of radio across a variety of screens. National Public Radio's official name change to "NPR" in 2010 serves as a marker of this: it's not just radio anymore.

Sound as a Screen Medium

Digital streaming brought radio stations as well as independent providers onto the web, where existing practices could be made visible and material, substituting a coherent screen-based interface for a set of prior practices that had been scattered and evanescent. Next, and more slowly, came the realization

of exactly what this new convergence of sight and sound could do to alter radio completely. Radio was now a screen medium, possessing extended capabilities that posed an enormous challenge to producers used to working with sound in its traditional forms. Radio became as much a web experience—conveyed across various and shifting displays of textual and visual information—as it remained a sound experience.

And more screens were on the way. In January 2001, Apple introduced its iTunes service, the first commercially successful web-based interface for downloading audio and video files via computer screens. It also had a radio application that gave access to audio streaming sites, opening up the gates. Later that year the Apple iPod debuted, providing the first small portable screen through which music could be accessed. By early 2004, podcasting emerged on the scene, a new alternative distribution route for serially produced programming. Drawing on the ease of digital audio production, combined with syndicating software and web-based distribution, podcasting exploded in 2005 as iTunes 4.9 began podcast hosting. Millions of podcasts are produced today, hosted on a wide range of sites, distributed free or for small subscription fees.²⁰ Now streaming radio disaggregated, hiving off programs as podcasts from their digital archives. Live listening became one option among many others. The introduction of the iPhone and other smart phones beginning in 2007 supplied yet another screen through which audio work can be discovered and accessed, introducing the now ubiquitous "app" as an interface; not only the iPad, introduced in 2009, but other tablet and e-readers with audio capacity extend app-based soundtrack onto yet another platform, along with the capacity to connect to web-based services. Today, radio happens when you access a website or activate an app, click on a "play" arrow or touch an icon, plug in your headphones and set off down the street or lean back in front of your computer. These screen interfaces are radio, as much as the audiostream itself.

Screen-based radio—this rapidly evolving combination of digital production, web-based distribution, and mobile digital reception—set off a revolution in soundtrack and sound culture that has not yet been adequately assessed. I focus here primarily on the public broadcasting sector in the US, where innovation has been swift, profound, and internationally influential. Public broadcasters, with the weight of national organization and funding behind them, moved quickly into web-based operations, perceiving clearly what this new digital realm had to offer (just as they had with satellite distribution three decades earlier). US public radio experienced dramatic growth during this period, nearly doubling its audience between 1998 and 2008 and reaching a new high of 12% of the listening public.²¹ NPR began distributing its archived programs online as early as 1996. Jonathan Kern, one of the few to consider the impact of the digital on radio production, still considers this the most profound change: radio now has not only a spatial presence but a temporal fixity, allowing programs and news stories that would have been almost completely inaccessible after first broadcast

to be preserved both as audio and as transcribed text, retrieved, searched by keyword or topic, and used to document the past on a day-to-day basis, in a way that only magazines and newspapers could do before.²² This archival function will have an enormous impact on the way that historians, as well as journalists, work in the future.

Besides online archiving, Kern points to several major ways that the digital screen has allowed broadcasters to enhance and extend the scope of their work. First, and most obviously, online materials can provide a *new visual dimension* to audio material, from photographs to videos to charts and graphs. The audio slide show has become an increasingly popular hybrid form, found on sound and print sites alike. Graphic display and organization of visual and audio components of a radio station's offerings make an immense difference—something traditional broadcasters are little used to dealing with. Program makers must become adept with digital cameras and video editing, and graphics editors have been added to radio station staffs. Some radio programs are also available as video productions, as with NPR's *Tiny Desk Concerts*; video clips of films and television shows can be added to reviews; footage of interviews and events can accompany the basic audio story. Indeed, it is obvious from NPR's webpage that the actual programs presented in its radio stream are only one small feature of that organization's current operations. If the main tabs at the top of a website can be used as an indication of the structural significance of activities (critical website analysis is still in its infancy), then the fact that materials disaggregated from the program flow and re-organized under the headings "News," "Arts and Life," and "Music" precede "Programs" and "Listen"—the latter two surely NPR's sole concern even a decade ago—marks a fundamental change in NPR's sense of itself and its priorities.

This also indicates the way that digital platforms can *extend and deepen* audio resources far beyond the usually limited time slots of streaming radio. The entire, unedited version of an interview, long stretches of actuality sound recorded on-location, entire speeches and public presentations, aspects of a story that get cut from the final version—all of these can find a permanent home on the web, broken down into easily accessible bits and searchable via transcription. Unlike traditional media, whether radio, print, or film, there are few length or space restrictions for digital material; no "news hole" or three-minute limit. The limitless capacity of digital media has also extended the authorial and editorial voice of radio producers, who now often preside over blogs that permit additional contributions and allow dialogue with listeners that in turn can find its way back into programs. Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr, and YouTube extend radio's reach, broadening its community.

Such digital practices allow connections to be made between subjects and materials that go beyond their initial formats or presentation, another form of disaggregation. Multi-media elements can be grouped thematically, enabling a multi-dimensional exploration; they can be linked to related stories, visuals,

sounds, or digital sites and materials. They can be re-contextualized, provided with new introductions and sidebars, supplemented with constantly updated resources, or linked to historical material. Finally, digital platforms present a set of *interactive* potentials of great value to producers and listeners alike. Besides audio comments and solicited contributions from listeners, which might be incorporated into programs or stories, listeners can participate in surveys, download materials, take part in online discussions, and find their own way through audio, visual, and textual materials in a unique sequence.

Digital platforms have also enabled novel forms of distribution. Digital or HD radio has been slower to roll out in the US than in the UK, where the BBC led the way in introducing a number of digital audio channels that supplement their regular service. Besides the traditional national channels, Radio 1 (pop music), Radio 2 (mixed music), Radio 3 (classical), Radio 4 (news and talk), and Radio 5 (live sports), "Extra" channels have been added: 1Xtra (R&B and hip hop), 4 Extra (arts and drama), 5 Live Sports Extra; 6 Music (alternative/eclectic), and the BBC Asian Network (news and talk for the British Asian minority). A few US public radio stations have begun offering HD radio channels, usually as a supplement to their main service, but it has yet to become widespread and sales of HD tuners have languished.

Podcasting, on the other hand, has become a major part of most public broadcasters' offerings. By 2009 NPR boasted 14 million monthly podcast downloads, alongside 8 million Web visitors.²³ While podcasting brings new listeners to NPR programming, it also raises tensions between the network and its stations, disaggregating not only programs but audiences. Online archives and podcasts allow listeners to bypass their local public radio station as purveyor of programs and go right to the source, either through NPR, through the producing station, or via a show's own website. This has the potential to undercut public radio's local membership, which now accounts for the largest percentage of station income; it also directly conflicts with the way that NPR funds its programming—43% of NPR's income derives from local station subscriptions. As one observer states:

If I'm running a station in Chapel Hill or Bloomington, I pay dues to NPR to get the marquee programming that brings people to my station—*All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*. I don't care about your digital initiative, or your *All Songs Considered*—you're siphoning my dues to build your national brand. That's the essence of the conflict.²⁴

The neat divisions that kept NPR in operation for decades—stations supply the audience, NPR supplies the programming—break down in the era of digital distribution, when a local listener can just as easily get the main network or any other public station on his or her electronic device as the one available locally on the radio dial. NPR is working on such tensions by initiating new ways of interacting with local affiliates, such as its State Impact pilot project.

This effort, though currently with limited participation from a few stations in eight states, offers enhanced reporting and analysis of issues aimed to benefit both national and local news, and to suture the diverging missions of the national network and its local affiliates back together. But it remains a serious challenge.

New digital platforms extend the issue of national brand versus local stations and independent producers even further. When I listen to the WNYC-produced show *On the Media* via my local public radio station, whether broadcast or streamed online, I hear my station's underwriting announcements, membership drive solicitations, IDs and news updates, and other materials that enhance the bottom line of, in my case, Wisconsin Public Radio. WPR in turn pays WNYC for the show, thus supporting its production in the traditional way. When I download the *On the Media* podcast on my iPad, iPod, or phone, though a brief address to "podcast listeners" at the beginning of the recording exhorts me to contribute to WNYC, there is no good mechanism to enable me to do so, nor am I connecting with my local station. This considerably subverts NPR's existing economic system, but it has also contributed to a whole new sector of sound production that intersects with but exceeds what NPR could provide in the past. The final section of this chapter looks at a few such innovations.

"Movies for Radio:" The Return of the Radio Feature

As Virginia Madsen points out in this volume, recent years have seen the return of the radio feature, along with renewed interest in its nearly forgotten history. This history goes back to Lance Sieveking and his fellow experimenters in the 1920s, but it became established 1936, when the BBC created a Features Department under the direction of Lawrence Gilliam. Here producers like D. G. Bridson, Neta Pain, Louis MacNeice, and Marjorie Banks²⁵ developed the art of sound in a form that used an arsenal of creative techniques to represent reality convincingly within the confines of the live studio. America's answer to their experiments came with the initiation of CBS's *Columbia Workshop* also in 1936, mainly revolving around the work of Norman Corwin, celebrated in the 1940s and 50s as "radio's poet laureate." His sometimes overheated productions, especially those in the service of the war effort, combined elements of documentary realism with poetry, drama, soaring music, and hortatory address to great effect and widespread popularity; many still hail his post-war victory celebration *On a Note of Triumph* as the best single creative soundwork ever produced. In Britain and Europe generally, where national public broadcasters flourished after the war, the radio feature tradition continued and expanded. Britain's highbrow Third Programme in particular, established in 1947, weaned the feature from its war-inspired documentary emphasis and took it in a more literary and poetic direction. In the US, as radio shifted its economic and

cultural base, and as the new style of documentary realism (enabled by new technologies) began to predominate in radio and television news coverage, the radio feature became a thing of the past, all but forgotten, or stripped down and compressed into eight-minute segments on *All Things Considered* or *Weekend Edition*.²⁶

It took the success of Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, which debuted in a small way in 1974 on Minnesota Public Radio but gradually expanded nationwide, to begin to open up US radio to new forms again. In 1983, Minnesota Public Radio joined with three other powerful centers of local public radio production—WNYC New York, WGBH Boston, and KUUS Los Angeles—to form American Public Radio, which began to provide an alternative to NPR and to produce and distribute a wider range of programs. It changed its name to Public Radio International (PRI) in 1993, but also split off a segment of its production arm which, confusingly, took the name American Public Media (APM) in 1994. Together, APM and PRI began the diversification process that revolutionized US public radio in the 90s, just as digital platforms began to emerge. NPR, APM, and PRI, along with the efforts of some visionary radio artist and producers, ushered in the era of the new radio feature, along with the programs and digital resources that sustain it.

Today's radio feature might be best exemplified by two of the most heralded programs on NPR in recent years: Ira Glass's *This American Life* and its science-based companion, *Radiolab*, created by Jad Abumrad and Robert Krulwich. Both hold tightly to their claims on factual realism and the documentary aesthetic, but both create sonic storyworlds that employ a complex palette of audio elements, including music, sound effects, intricate layering, gem-like editing, and narrative techniques ranging from the intimate confessional essay to the dramatic sound portrait. Both programs make full and creative use of the visibility and materiality that digital platforms enable. Their websites are elaborate, visually playful extensions of the soundtrack of the show, providing background information, extensive archives, and various ways of interacting with the material.

This American Life originated in Chicago on public radio station WBEZ, after its creator Ira Glass became frustrated with the limitations that production for NPR's newsmagazines placed on his imagination. Glass envisioned a reality-based program that would draw on the immense variety of lived experience, related in the first person but incorporating an evocative use of music and materials recorded outside the studio, pulled together with a thematic emphasis that featured Glass's own distinctive voice and address in "first-person singular"—along the lines of Orson Welles's first radio experiments. The show posts its own description:

We're not a news show or a talk show or a call-in show. We're not really formatted like other radio shows at all. Instead, we do these stories that

are like movies for radio. There are people in dramatic situations. Things happen to them. There are funny moments and emotional moments and—hopefully—moments where the people in the story say interesting, surprising things about it all. It has to be surprising. It has to be fun.²⁷

And it has to be “real”—these “movies for radio” are fundamentally documentaries, even if they elaborate in dramatic ways. This was demonstrated in January 2012, when the episode “Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory” presented an audio version of monologist Mike Daisey’s theatrical exposé of working conditions in Apple’s China factories that proved to be partly fictionalized. *TAL* produced an entire new episode exposing Daisey’s misrepresentations and asserting its factual, journalistic credentials, later removing the original episode from its website.²⁸

Yet the show frequently wanders across the lines that journalists usually observe, incorporating subjective experience, offbeat points of view, dreams, drama, and memory, along with Glass’s own musings, less factual than philosophical, as its frame. As they say, “We think of the show as journalism,” but add: “It’s also true that the journalism we do tends to use a lot of the techniques of fiction: scenes and characters and narrative threads.” Putting it even more strongly, one analyst claims, “*TAL* invites listeners to revel in a sort of postmodern opposition to mainstream journalism,”²⁹ much of it composed by well-known creative artists whose work crosses diverse media platforms: David Sedaris, Michael Chabon, Sarah Vowell, Nick Hornby, Mike Birbiglia, and many more. Its characteristic “themed” structure uses not topicality or urgent public affairs issues to organize each episode, but motifs that put human interest first. Show #470, “Show Me the Way,” tells “stories about people in trouble, who look for help in mystifying places,” while #468, “Switcheroo,” is about “people pretending to be someone they’re not.” Others are focused on more traditionally journalistic events or issues, such as #459, “What Kind of Country,” that highlights the problems facing local governments in the economic downturn, or plunge into history, like #465, “What Happened at Dos Erres,” about a 1982 massacre in Guatemala long erased from the historical record, produced in cooperation with the non-profit journalism organization Pro Publica.³⁰

Organizationally, *TAL*’s production structure reflects its varied focus. A team of core producers works closely with Glass, creating their own pieces and serving as story editors for other independent work brought in from all over. In this sense it is as much a showcase for a diverse range of creative soundwork, employing a wide variety of styles, as an aesthetically unified effort—though no one who listens regularly could deny the distinctiveness of its sound overall. Its success has been phenomenal: according to its website the show now reaches 1.8 million listeners over more than 500 stations weekly; its podcast is one of the most popular in the US. It has won most major awards, including three

Emmy’s for its short-lived TV version (2006–08) on Showtime. This no doubt has much to do with *TAL*’s ubiquity in the new material world of radio: it can be accessed in an impressive number of ways, by broadcast, podcast, and archive, downloaded from iTunes or Amazon, streamed on iPad, iPhone, or Android, or rented from Netflix. This also demonstrates the shifting economics of public radio. Now produced in New York City by Chicago Public Radio (a non-profit venture that includes WBEZ and several other broadcasting services and nationally distributed programs) and distributed through PRI, *TAL* still relies on viewer donations even while marketing itself enthusiastically.

If *This American Life* exhibits the blurring of fact and fictional modes and the emphasis on first person expression of the traditional radio feature, another prominent show, *Radiolab*, excels in the creative experimentation with sound that also marks the genre. Created by Jad Abumrad and Robert Krulwich in 2005 on New York public radio station WNYC, *Radiolab* bills itself as “a show about curiosity. Where sound illuminates ideas, and the boundaries blur between science, philosophy, and human experience.”³¹ Both Krulwich and Abumrad are, like Glass, NPR-trained; they first collaborated on an episode submitted to, and rejected by, *This American Life*. In *Radiolab* the focus is on science, math, and the physical and human environment, but in place of *TAL*’s compilation of individual stories, *Radiolab* is unified around the creative sensibilities of its two hosts and their stable of producers. Leading us into their highly varied weekly subjects—ranging from the physics of a popular toy, on “What a Slimy Knows,” to an exploration of the nature of physical pain, on “Inside Ouch”—most episodes begin with the “two guys talking” frame that has become the show’s trademark: an oblique, sometimes stumbling, quirky conversation between the two hosts, marked by frequent outbursts of laughter and self-reflective references to the task at hand. Here they ask the central questions that will organize that day’s show, exclaiming over their own initial ignorance about the topic and surprise at their findings.

This chatty frame helps to lead the listener into topics that might otherwise be rejected as too dry or serious, but it is the show’s unique and often stunning use of sound itself that persuades them to stay. *Radiolab* is crafted in the studio, creating the kind of “kaleidosonic” space³² many listeners won’t have experienced since Norman Corwin, if ever. It is made up of many elements, some of them taken from on-location interviews and actuality, but blended with strange and unusual noises, bursts of music, vocal collages, and the sonic re-creation of phenomena that may defy logic but effectively invoke understanding, like the sound of a brain under surgery, or what a bee might hear in the hive. We enter into a mental universe not our own, where abstractions take on an aural form that helps to make them real, and the unexpected, complex juxtaposition of disparate elements creates a listening experience that in itself represents the subject at hand. As one writer describes it,

Radiolab is about exploring ideas—big, difficult, abstract ideas—and more than anything it achieves that through experience. Here, experience is meant in a double-sense: creating a fun, adventurous listening experience for the listener, as well as connecting, through intimacy and description, to universal thoughts and feelings that the audience will be acquainted with personally.³³

It works; *Radiolab* is distributed by more than 300 stations and attracts a vital and communicative fan community. Its host and producer Jad Abumrad, whose sensibilities as a former composer of film music shape the show, received a MacArthur Fellow award in 2011.

Radiolab's highly crafted style, where longer recorded interviews and actualities are often disaggregated and reassembled in small, heavily edited bits into the radio show, has created an opportunity for the show's digital portal to expand and re-situate some of its materials. The website features "Radiolab Blogland" where producers can extend their thoughts in print on a recent topic and provide links to additional audio, created in research but unused in the show. They can also provide news about the program and its people to the listener base, and promote upcoming appearances—like *This American Life*, *Radiolab* has its own highly successful touring theatrical show. Under the "Watch" tab, the producers have assembled short video clips that complement its stories. Unlike *TAL*, which uses its website not only to promote listening but also as a point of participation—encouraging listeners to submit story ideas, promoting internships, and referring would-be radio artists to a host of public radio initiatives that might help them (see below), *Radiolab* remains a singular work of genius, very much attached to its award-winning creators and to its function as a science program, supported in part by the National Science Foundation.

The New Soundwork Infrastructure

These two nationally distributed and wildly successful programs are only the tip of the iceberg of innovations in the soundwork industry made possible by the sound's new materiality in the digital age. Digital gateways and networking organizations like Transom, Public Radio Exchange, and the Third Coast International Audio Festival provide interlinked venues for independent sound artists to display their work, offer it up for sale and distribution, receive critical commentary, and find resources to enable their efforts. Such work would have been lost in the ephemeral streaming flow of radio in years past, heard once and passed over forever, or perhaps collected in specialty catalogues of audio cassette collectors and sound enthusiasts. Now they can be enjoyed by all of us, whether or not they ever reach the air.

The two most significant organizations, Transom and Public Radio Exchange (PRX) are both spinoffs of the same public radio company, Atlantic

Public Media. All three are the brain children of radio producer Jay Allison, possibly the most influential figure in the digital soundwork field today. Allison, who started out on NPR, as most independent radio producers did in the pre-digital era, has co-produced or contributed to virtually all of the significant shows and series on radio, including *This American Life*, *Lost and Found Sound*, *The Sonic Memorial Project*, *Hidden Kitchens*, and currently produces the NPR series *This I Believe* and *The Moth*. In the early 1990s, he founded a non-profit company, Cape and Islands Community Public Radio (CICPR), to license and build the stations that eventually became WCAI Cape Cod, WNAN Nantucket, and WZAI Martha's Vineyard.

In 2000, with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and WGBH, he renamed CICPR Atlantic Public Media and, observing the opportunities that digital platforms were about to offer public radio, started up a new organization, Transom.org.³⁴ Both Transom and its sister site, the Public Radio Exchange (PRX), founded in 2002, were intended to actively intervene in the scattered but expanding world of digital audio production and distribution by building communities online where producers, stations, and listeners could productively converge. Both Transom and PRX have now entered their second decade of operation and have become significant facilitators of innovative soundwork, important "feeders" to the established distribution networks NPR, APM, and PIR, and valuable distributors in their own right.

Influenced by Allison's experience on the early online community network the WELL, and with seed funding from the Schuman Foundation Center for Media and Democracy, Transom was described by its co-founder, web designer Joshua Barlow, as a way to enable "citizen storytelling" through "giving people the opportunity to document using the Internet, [thereby] democratizing the media and helping to return radio to a time where you could find surprises."³⁵ Calling itself "a showcase and workshop for new public radio,"³⁶ Transom's main function is to "help ordinary people to tell their stories" by encouraging independent radio production. Allison writes,

Transom tells you what microphone to buy and how to use it, but more than that we try to pass the baton, to attract a new generation of zealots, bred on the Internet, to bring their talents to public radio. Remarkable guests present manifestos and answer questions. We feature new work from new people. Our premise is that if we don't attract passionate talent, we wither.³⁷

The website provides how-to advice on audio production tools and techniques, promotes its annual production workshops, profiles young audio artists, and makes connections between them and established producers in the field. It also showcases the work that comes out of such initiatives, aiming to attract larger audiences and to the stories it tells. In 2004, Transom won the

first Peabody Award ever granted to a stand-alone website.³⁸ It was Jay Allison's fifth Peabody.

Transom helped provide the inspiration for the even more ambitious Public Radio Exchange, or PRX. A joint project between Allison and Jake Shapiro of Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, PRX grew out of a discussion on Transom's active discussion boards. With the avowed mission to "help make public radio more public," PRX works as a showcase, a distribution exchange, and a rights allocator for soundwork, bringing independent sound artists together with stations primarily in the non-profit sector. As they explain it: "PRX is an open system—anyone can join, publish, license content, and earn royalties. Hundreds of public, community, college, and Low Power FM (LPFM) stations buy pieces on PRX for their local air."³⁹ It hosts a streaming channel to exhibit new work, called Public Radio Remix, and develops apps for public radio stations and programs. Its archiving and access system is one of the most inventive around, allowing users to search not only by topic and by format, but by tone: amusing, dark, quirky, raw, sound-rich, humorous, up-beat, and even Fresh Air-ish. Shapiro, now the executive director of PRX, explains the PRX idea: "that locally-run noncommercial radio stations can be allies in the effort to find new voices, new ideas, and new ways to connect in a diverse and complex world."⁴⁰ By 2012, PRX listed more than 50 radio series for distribution, and was running a number of projects to support independent radio production, including The Moth Radio Hour, Public Radio Remix, a streaming channel of PRX shows online and available for broadcast, and the Public Radio Accelerator, a center designed to stimulate entrepreneurial projects in public media.

The Third Coast International Audio Festival, based in Chicago, is another independent non-profit organization that promotes innovative radio work and distributes it through its website to the public and to interested stations. It does indeed host an annual festival of soundwork, but it also functions as an audio library of award-winning work. It distributes a weekly radio show, *Re:Sound* featuring radio work that extends beyond the US to producers in many other countries. Its national radio show, *The Best of the Best: The Third Coast Festival Broadcast* is carried by stations across the US once a year, featuring the festival winners. It also distributes the *Third Coast Podcast*, featuring *Re:Sound* programs and an assortment of others from the archive. One unique aspect of Third Coast is its public listening events, called "Listening Rooms," which take place not only in Chicago but in venues across the country, as well as its annual conference that attracts independent radio soundwork and artists from around the world. Unique too is its annual "Filmless Festival" that brings audiences together for a day of sitting in the dark, listening to "screenings" of work curated by well-known artists. Just like a film festival, but as they say "minus the popcorn—too noisy."⁴¹

Conclusion

The new soundwork industry is alive and flourishing as never before. Sound's convergence with the digital transformed this under-studied sphere of media production, enabling new forms of creativity, distribution, funding, access, and exchange. It also places radio history in a new light, as some of the aspects of soundwork conceived as fundamental to the medium now shift and change. From the ephemerality of live radio, to the creative constraints of the analogue era, radio now embraces an enormous range of sonic forms and practices as a screen medium. In particular, the revival of the radio feature, and its extension into newly enabled digital forms and participatory models made possible by the web, has ushered in a level of creativity never before possible in the field of sound. While public service broadcasters have been among the first to embrace and extend digital innovation, commercial radio seems to have moved in the other direction, using digital distribution to consolidate and standardize formats developed in a previous era. In contrast, public radio has embraced digital populism; as John Biewen argues, "populism suits radio, a medium whose field equipment is inexpensive and, these days, practically as portable as a pencil."⁴² But can this level of creative work be sustained? Radio still lurks below the level of consciousness for the culture at large, rarely reviewed in mainstream venues, cherished with almost cult-like intensity by those who appreciate its charms.

This will certainly change. Already, stage shows based on radio have attracted large audiences around the country—*This American Life*, *Radio Lab*, and *A Prairie Home Companion* were all on the road in 2012–13—and more and more scholars and appreciative enthusiasts are building up critical work, most of it, appropriately, online and often in the form of further soundwork. Radio today is building its archive as it grows, and preserving the medium's past as well. Creative soundwork functions beautifully with the way that mobile media are used today—on the move, engaged in activities that require our eyes to be free while our minds remain occupied. Among those semi-private/semi-public spaces created by new media, where we interact physically with crowds or the environment while maintaining our mental privacy, radio helps maintain a kind of attentive disengagement, an interactive solitude. This corresponds well with the kind of "despatialized simultaneity" discussed by digital media theorist Zizi Papacharissi as our current mode of civic engagement, "a technologically enabled mobile private sphere of thought, expression, and reaction" that supplements and in some ways corrects more traditional participation in the public sphere.⁴³ The stories told by the new soundwork resonate intimately as they circulate globally, connecting us with voices and experiences outside our everyday lives. And thanks to the new digital stuff of radio, they also form a type of archive never before possible, materializing sound on screens.

Notes

1. I want to thank the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for a fellowship that facilitated this project, through many lively conversations. Thanks also to the Hamel Family for funding the research that made it possible.
 2. Robert W. McClesney, Robert Hilliard, and Michael Keith, *The Quieted Voice: The Rise and Demise of Localism in American Radio* (Champaign: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005).
 3. I use the term "soundwork" to designate creative/constructed aural texts that employ the basic sonic elements of speech, music, and noise; this excludes the field normally encompassed by the term "music," though of course the boundaries are anything but clear. Typically speech is the dominant aspect of soundwork, with music and noise secondary.
 4. Rudolf Arnheim, *Radio: An Art of Sound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).
 5. Lance Sieveking, *The Stuff of Radio* (London: Cassell, 1934).
 6. Paddy Scannell, "The Stuff of Radio": Developments in Radio Features and Documentaries before the War." In *Documentary and the Mass Media* ed. John Corner (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 1–26.
 7. There are exceptions: The forerunner of the *Amos 'n' Andy* show, *Sam 'n' Henry*, was produced on records at WMAQ Chicago for syndication. See also Alex Russo, *Points on the Dial: Golden Age Radio Beyond the Networks* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
 8. Shawn VanCour, "The Sounds of Radio: Aesthetic Formations of 1920s American Broadcasting" (PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008).
 9. Transcription discs were 17" in diameter and had to be played on a special turntable that could handle them; many of them were grooved in such a way that the recording played back centrifugally, from the center of the record, not the outer edge. They were used to sell recorded programs to stations via syndication but were not released to the consumer market.
 10. See <http://www.bitnetnet.com/~roger.beckwith/bh/tapes/pm.htm>.
 11. German engineers had developed magnetic recording during World War II; American manufacturers appropriated the technology post-war.
 12. However, the crime and suspense genre of radio programs, which came into prominence in the late 1940s and continued to air throughout the 1950s, though produced and broadcast live, were extensively recorded for syndication. They make up the bulk of our preserved old-time radio archive and are widely circulated online (and revived on broadcast stations) today.
 13. A notable exception to this was the BBC Transcription Service, which began distributing hundreds of hours of programming, much of it drawn from the Third Programme, to broadcasters around the world from the 1950s through the 1970s. Educational radio stations in the US drew heavily on BBC transcriptions, and also recorded and shared a limited number of documentary and dramatic programs themselves.
 14. This project was initiated and pushed forward by Frank Maniewicz, head of NPR at the time—and the son of Herman Maniewicz, Orson Welles's collaborator on *Citizen Kane*.
 15. Jack Mitchell, *Listener Supported: The Culture and History of Public Radio* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005), 89.
 16. *Ibid.* This had been the early BBC model, largely abandoned by the 1950s.
 17. Public radio audiences more than doubled in the 1980s, thanks to a shift to block programming schedules that "served to stabilize the station's appeal [and] identity." David Giovannoni, "Radio Intelligence: A Long View of Public Radio's National Audience Growth, 1970–1983. The Service Grows Through Availability. Then Through Accessibility." *Current* 11, no. 3 (February 1992).
 18. In countries with a well-established public service broadcasting tradition, as prevailed throughout much of Europe in particular, the permanence and high profile of national radio services and their supporting material practices—such as high-circulation printed program guides and a tradition of published criticism—made the invisibility of radio less acute, and diverse audio forms flourished in a way that simply was not true in the US.
19. Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
 20. Podcasting is a sphere of soundwork in its own right that I wish to subsume here under the heading "radio" but whose full dimensions cannot be explored in these pages.
 21. A \$200 million gift from Joan Kroc, the widow of MacDonald's founder Ray Kroc, in 2003 didn't hurt, either.
 22. Jonathan Kern, *Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
 23. Anya Kamenetz, "Will NPR Save the News?" *Fast Company* (April 1, 2009). <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/134/finely-tuned.html?page=0%2C0>.
 24. *Ibid.*, quoting Paul Fathi of *The Washington Post*.
 25. See Scannell, op. cit., for the roots of this tradition; also Hilmes, *Network Nations*, 120–132.
 26. Though see Matthew Ebrilick, *Radio Utopia: Postwar Radio Documentary in the Public Interest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), for an excellent history of the US radio documentary during the Cold War era.
 27. <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/about/about-our-radio-show>.
 28. <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/454/mr-daisey-and-the-apple-factory>.
 29. Eleanor Patterson, "On Radio: Ira Glass, Radio Star," *Antenna* (April 9, 2012) <http://blog.commentary.wisc.edu/2012/04/09/on-radio-ira-glass-radio-star/>.
 30. <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives>.
 31. <http://www.radiolab.org/about/>.
 32. This term is developed by Neil Verma to indicate a sonic position untethered to a specific character or "point of audition," in *Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
 33. Andrew Bottomley, "On Radio: Radiolab and the Art of the Modern Radio Feature," *Antenna* (January 11, 2012) <http://blog.commentary.wisc.edu/2012/01/11/on-radio-radiolab/>.
 34. <http://atlantic.org/local/history>.
 35. Maria Villafana, "Transom.org Aims to Spread Storytelling Skills," *The Washington Post*, May 17, 2004.
 36. Transom.org. <http://transom.org>
 37. Jay Allison, "Afterword," in *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* ed. John Biewen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 192.
 38. <http://blog.prx.org/2004/04/prx-congratulates-transomorg-on-peabody-award/>
 39. PRX, "About PRX: Making Public Radio More Public." Public Radio Exchange, <http://www.prx.org/about-us/what-is-prx>.
 40. Jake Shapiro and Steve Schultze, "The Public Radio Exchange," *The Transom Review* 3, no. 8 (December 2003), 1. <http://transom.org/guests/review/200312.review.prx.pdf?9d7bd4>.
 41. <http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/happenings/filmless-festival>.
 42. Biewen, op. cit., 6.
 43. Zizi Paparachi, *A Private Sphere: Democracy in the Digital Age* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2011), 136. See also Jason Loviglio's exploration of radio's public/private divide in *Radio's Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass-Mediated Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

Collegial Testimonials

Jason Jacobs – University of Queensland

Michele singlehandedly transformed our understanding of broadcasting history, and her scholarship is unmatched in the field for its comprehensiveness, insight and innovation. I have been lucky enough to collaborate with her on one book, and am currently working with her on an Australian funded project; she is without doubt the best cultural historian working today, an outstanding scholar and a fine friend. She certainly deserves this award.

Derek W. Vaillant – University of Michigan

Professor Hilmes deserves a Lifetime Achievement Award for her foundational work on the cultural and institutional history of U.S. and British Broadcasting, particularly as it connects the history of radio to larger forces in twentieth century communications from the rise of media industries to the centralization of mass media technology in the private home. Not only has Hilmes produced outstanding single-author works, she has co-edited two important anthologies devoted to the history of broadcasting. These works not only demonstrate the fascinating breadth of radio's place in everyday life, they afforded a new generation of scholars an opportunity to come together, develop community, and establish their own research profiles. Professor Hilmes stands out as an outstanding mentor and catalyzing force in the careers of dozens of junior scholars active in media history and sound studies. Her commitment to excelling in her own research and training and supporting the next generation of academic researchers is exceptional among her cohort of senior scholars in the field of media and communications history.

David Goodman – University of Melbourne

Michele Hilmes has played really important roles in internationalising the fields in which she has worked – through the example of her own pathbreaking transnational and comparative scholarship, through initiating conferences and publications that welcomed and provided a context for such new and exploratory work and by supporting and creating connections between international scholars; her importance as a catalyst and connector in this way is hard to overstate.

Shawn VanCour – University of California, Los Angeles

Michele Hilmes's copious publications cover film, broadcasting, and digital media from the late nineteenth century to the present and have been consistently field-defining work. *Hollywood and Broadcasting* broke ground with its transmedia approach to film and broadcasting, while *Radio Voices* set new standards for archival research and together with the *Radio Reader* revived the field of radio studies, presenting a new cultural approach that became the model for future work on this medium. *Network Nations* continued to challenge existing work with its innovative

transnational approach, and *Only Connect* remains the standard textbook for history courses at hundreds of universities in the U.S. and abroad. Hilmes has worked tirelessly to gain exposure for key film and broadcasting collections in the Wisconsin Historical Society and UW Center for Film and Theater Research, has received some of the nation's top research awards (including a Fulbright), and was instrumental in securing a place for radio and television scholarship at SCMS, transforming this organization into the one we know today. She has trained a new generation of media scholars who are now leaders in the field, and her work has influenced countless more. I can think of few scholars more deserving of SCMS's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Bill Kirkpatrick – Denison University

1. Michele's scholarship deservedly gets a lot of credit for sparking the renaissance in radio studies, but at least as important has been her teaching and mentoring. She has inspired two decades worth of grad students to study radio: showing them why it's important and rewarding, and demonstrating why it's exciting. She has followed up that teaching and advising with outstanding mentoring, using her knowledge and stature in the field to help young radio scholars (whether or not they came up through Wisconsin's program) to find each other, find audiences for their work, and find a viable place within the discipline. Yes, Radio Voices was an important contribution to media studies, but it was Michele's teaching and advising that really revived radio studies.

2. To this day I keep Michele's example in mind when advising student research. She was unflaggingly encouraging and supportive, but you also always knew exactly where you stood. In other words, she sure that it was always all about the work, and I can never express how much I appreciated that. Her reputation in the department was: you don't go to Michele if you need a hug or a pep talk, you go to her if you need to know honestly whether you are on the right track and to figure out what else you could be doing with your findings and ideas. I try to model that for my own advisees today.

3. My greatest debt (of many) to Michele is that she taught me to love archival research. She was the first person at any level of my education to actually walk me over to the archives, pull a box of documents, and tell me to get to work. At first I thought, jeez, what a pain--this is going to be the most boring day of my life. But that lasted for no more than ten minutes before suddenly an entirely new world opened up. Here was all this amazing stuff--handwritten letters, interoffice memos, ad copy, radio scripts--each document telling a story, and each of those stories becoming part of a larger narrative. For the first time in my life, as a second-year Masters student, I "got" what it meant to do research. The only comparable experience in my education was when I fell in love with media studies in the first place, when I was an undergraduate and a professor screened a Buster Keaton film. I will forever be grateful that Michele unlocked the door to a whole new way of looking at the past, of creating knowledge, of thinking about media. I do love teaching, but to this day, my most contented moments as a professor are at a table with a box of archival records, and that's entirely thanks to Michele.

Cynthia Meyers – Mt. St. Vincent College

1. Michele is the opposite of those territorial academics who behave as if they retain property rights to a field and can dictate its direction. Michele encourages others to explore areas of fields she has worked in. She shares information and ideas—and not just with her students but generously with scholars from different institutions, disciplines, and at all levels of the academic hierarchy. Her commitment to supporting others' scholarship springs from a genuine love for the scholarship itself.

2. At my very first conference as a graduate student, Michele, who I had never met before, came up to me and introduced herself saying, “Oh, you're the student giving the paper on the Hummerts! I'm so glad you are doing that!” I was astonished that a well-known scholar would not only a new grad student, but also that she would welcome me to “her” field instead of treat me as an interloper. Michele's support for scholars at all levels, from different disciplines, institutions, and perspectives, springs from her deep and genuine interest in good scholarship for scholarship's sake.

Neil Verma – Northwestern University

Michele is the single person who links radio studies, sound studies and television studies. The whole field of media studies wouldn't be configured the way it is without her.

Hugh Chignell – Bournemouth University (UK)

Michele Hilmes is without doubt the foremost broadcasting historian in the US. Her work has had an enormous impact on British broadcasting and media history establishing the highest standards of archive research combined with elegantly written and sophisticated analysis. *Radio Voices* is one of the most important works of radio history and essential reading for any radio historian. Michele is also the most generous, sympathetic and supportive scholar who has hoped countless numbers of less accomplished researchers.

Darrell Newton – Salisbury University

I would like to offer my support for Michele Hilmes to earn an SCMS Lifetime Achievement Award. Far beyond the outstanding scholarly contributions, Michele has also demonstrated a sincere desire to assist students and colleagues in a number of ways. As a past student in the UW Comm Arts program, I found Michele to be very enthusiastic about my work, yet honest in her assessment and feedback. However, long after completing the program and moving through the ranks of academe, I could still turn to Michele for advice and guidance through a number of challenges and decisions. She has always been there for me and many others; offering warmth, and encouragement.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Michele Hilmes, who is being considered as a potential recipient of the 2017 Brock International Prize in Education. I have had the chance to watch from a distance the enormous impact that Hilmes has had through her time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Communication Arts Program (where I did my PhD), not only on the lives of her own students but on the field of media studies and media education as a whole. When I was a student at Madison, there was a story, probably apocryphal, of a job applicant for a position teaching broadcast history who was asked how radio fit into her research agenda and responded, "Why would I study that? Isn't it mostly music?" We chuckled over the story at the time, at least those of us who had a deeper appreciation of the ways radio history prefigures television history, but the perspective would be unthinkable today, thanks to Hilmes' tireless efforts to make research into radio, in both its historical and contemporary forms, central to our understanding of broadcasting, and more generally media history.

She did this through her own output as a scholar, including several significant books that expanded the critical vocabulary and canon of radio history, moving us from a topic beloved by collectors and buffs into one where we could ask critical questions about the nature of the medium, its interplay with other media industries, its constructions of race and gender identities, its place in the larger history of popular genres, and its various audiences. She did so through her work as an editor and conference planner, who helped to identify people around the world who shared her interest in this topic and pushed them to put their thinking into writing, allowing her along the way to start to shape a much larger and more diverse research agenda in this space. She did so in the classroom, getting several generations of Madison PhD candidates invested in radio history as part of their larger vision of the field of media studies, and mentoring them through their first projects in this space.

As she approaches retirement, we are seeing a renewed interest in the history and potentials of radio, thanks to a new wave of innovative podcasts and experimental radio programs that have captured the collective imagination. As we seek to make sense of *Serial*, *99% Invisible*, *The Memory Palace*, *Welcome to Nightvale* or countless other examples of contemporary radio practice, we will value all the more the historical perspectives of Hilmes, her students, her collaborators, and the many others, like myself, that she has inspired through the years on the evolution of radio. I strongly support this nomination.



Henry Jenkins



Dr. Michele Hilmes has been a pioneering scholar and author in the field of electronic media for more than three decades. More particularly, she has helped to develop and shape a growing sub-field of radio studies. In doing so she has expanded her own work (thus setting a model for other scholars) beyond American borders to take in the often very different media worlds of Britain and other nations. Finally, she has worked with colleagues around the world and a generation of graduate students to spread all that is best about American media historical research.

Among her monographs, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952* (1997) centered on network programming to the rise of television; *Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable* (1999) was an early study of newer media impact on older services over three crucial decades; *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting* (2012); a comparative study of two quite different systems—and why they were and remain different; and *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States* (4th ed, 2013), an introductory survey to the field. Save for the last title which has a different intent, these studies are deeply research and rely on primary source material.

Her edited collections have proved important as well. *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio* (with Jason Loviglio, 2002) helped to define and promote the new sub-field of radio studies; *The Television History Book* (with Jason Jacobs, 2004) which also compared and contrasted efforts in two different countries; *NBC: America's Network* (2007) explored that changing impact of once powerful centralized networks; while *Radio Waves: Global Sound in the Digital Era* (with Jason Loviglio, 2013) examines the dramatic impact of digital technology in a dozen original essays.

Such a record (and I've not discussed her many articles) goes a long way in explaining how Dr. Hilmes has substantially impacted and improved her chosen field of study. All of us are in her debt.

Christopher H. Sterling
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Chair – National Recording Preservation Board
Library of Congress

9 September 2016



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September 23, 2016

Dear Colleagues;

I've been asked to write this letter in support of Michele Hilmes' candidacy for the 2017 Brock International Prize in Education, and I do so with great pleasure.

I knew of Prof. Hilmes' work long before I met her, and I collaborated with her over email for years before I finally met her. I mention this because it attests to her reputation, generosity of spirit and willingness to contribute to and participate in projects initiated by younger colleagues. When I wrote to her with no introduction other than my own description of my edited volume and request that she write a postscript for it, she agreed to it right away and sent a lovely essay a short time later. It was an honor to get to include her in our volume on media in Latin America and the Caribbean, and an example of her gracious and supportive stance in academia.

More recently, I've become part of a large digital humanities project in which she also participates. The Radio Preservation Task Force seeks to identify and preserve radio recordings, many of which are in imminent danger of deterioration or decay. Prof. Hilmes has been an important part of this project, contributing to the work and to the dissemination of information about it with her encyclopedic knowledge of radio history. She has also been instrumental in bringing additional people on board, especially scholars (like myself) who are working with non-English and non-mainstream sources, in keeping with her conviction that U.S. radio history must be approached from a transnational perspective. The work of preservation by this task force is important to students as well as scholars of the media. As our undergraduate students operate in increasingly complex media settings, it is crucial to acquaint them with the historical contexts and political dilemmas that are so important to media environments past as well as present and future. Prof. Hilmes has served as a leader in this endeavor, and I'm delighted for this opportunity to share her contributions with you.

Sincerely;

Alejandra Bronfman
Associate Professor of History
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September 26, 2016

Dear Brock Prize judges,

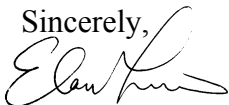
This letter is meant to offer you a sense of the admiration and esteem with which Dr. Michele Hilmes is held within the field of media studies and the specialized study of radio and television history. Professor Hilmes was a central figure in my graduate education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and she is *the* leading figure in the field of broadcasting history. The example of her stellar scholarship, along with her highly effective teaching and thoughtful mentorship, are guiding lights for all of her students. In what follows, I reflect on some of her major intellectual contributions.

Professor Hilmes's second monograph, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952*, was a crucial contribution to the field. With this work, Prof. Hilmes shifted the conversation around the history of American radio, presenting the medium as a central cultural force in the shaping of American identity, and emphasizing the role of social difference along axes of gender, race, and ethnicity in struggles over nation-making. This perspective was quite new to radio history, as work up to this had focused more on the medium's regulation, technologies, and institutions. Prof. Hilmes managed to keep those frameworks in her narrative, but to decenter them. Instead, her work foregrounded such practices as young women's involvement in amateur radio broadcasting and the cultural functions of "blackface" and other ethnically identifiable performances in a non-visual medium. This book, together with projects such as her co-edited *Radio Reader*, defined the study of radio as an object of cultural history. The result has been a blossoming of interest in the medium, paired with its logical companion, the study of sound and aural media more generally. The major professional organization in the field, the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, initiated a scholarly interest group in Sound Studies inspired by Hilmes' work.

The history of television was developing along similar, culturally oriented lines in the same period as Prof. Hilmes' work on radio, and her impact was felt there as well. Thanks to Hilmes, TV historians necessarily address the precedential impact of radio upon the younger medium. More recently, she has expanded our understanding of broadcasting history yet further through a transnational turn. In *Network Nations*, Hilmes offers more than a comparative history of US and British broadcasting. She demonstrates the interdependence of these two rather different national broadcasting systems upon each other, helping us to see her longstanding interest in questions of nation and its relationship to broadcasting in a way that refuses the national boundaries these systems have worked to reinforce.

I hope this gloss of her contributions helps to illustrate the major impact of Prof. Hilmes and her work.

Sincerely,



Elana Levine
Professor



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September 25, 2016

Dear 2017 Brock International Prize Jury:

I am delighted to be able to offer my thoughts regarding Dr. Michelle Hilmes' scholarship and contributions to education in relation to her nomination for the 2017 Brock International Prize in Education. I strongly believe that Dr. Hilmes has embodied the principles of the Brock Prize and will summarize in this letter the vital contributions that she has made to education, and particularly to media history education, throughout her career as a scholar and university teacher and mentor.

I have known Dr. Hilmes since 2003; she was my colleague in the Media and Cultural Studies graduate research area of the Communication Arts Department at University of Wisconsin-Madison while I taught there from 2003 through 2011. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Hilmes for her mentorship and modeling of excellence with respect to undergraduate and graduate teaching in this early part of my career; I could easily elaborate in detail on Dr. Hilmes' strengths in this regard. However, I'd instead like to turn to Dr. Hilmes' importance to education more broadly through her seminal research in the fields of U.S. and British radio, television, and broadcasting history, in addition to her training and mentoring of scores of undergraduate students, graduates students, and junior scholars, many of whom have since joined the ranks of media historians around the globe, throughout her career.

Dr. Hilmes is among the top few scholars in the world of U.S. and British radio and broadcasting history. She arguably established radio studies as a legitimate field of inquiry in the U.S. with her meticulous, cogent, and accessible research, which deftly combines industrial historiography, cultural criticism, and critical analysis of radio texts to bring radio and television histories and their social significance to life for her readers. With her monographs (books such as *Hollywood and Broadcasting*, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952*, and *Network Nations: A Transnational History of American and British Broadcasting*) and textbooks used widely in high school, undergraduate, and graduate courses (particularly the seminal textbook *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States*), Dr. Hilmes has perhaps more than any other individual enabled and encouraged the teaching and learning of broadcast media history. Given the massive impact of this history on the past, present, and future, even as we turn to a new chapter of media history in the present day, I believe Dr. Hilmes's work quite faithfully embodies the principles of the Brock Prize. I heartily recommend that her nomination for the 2017 Brock International Prize be granted serious consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Beltrán".

Mary Beltrán
Associate Professor, Radio-Television-Film
Affiliate, Mexican American and Latina/o Studies,
Affiliate, Women's & Gender Studies
The University of Texas at Austin